



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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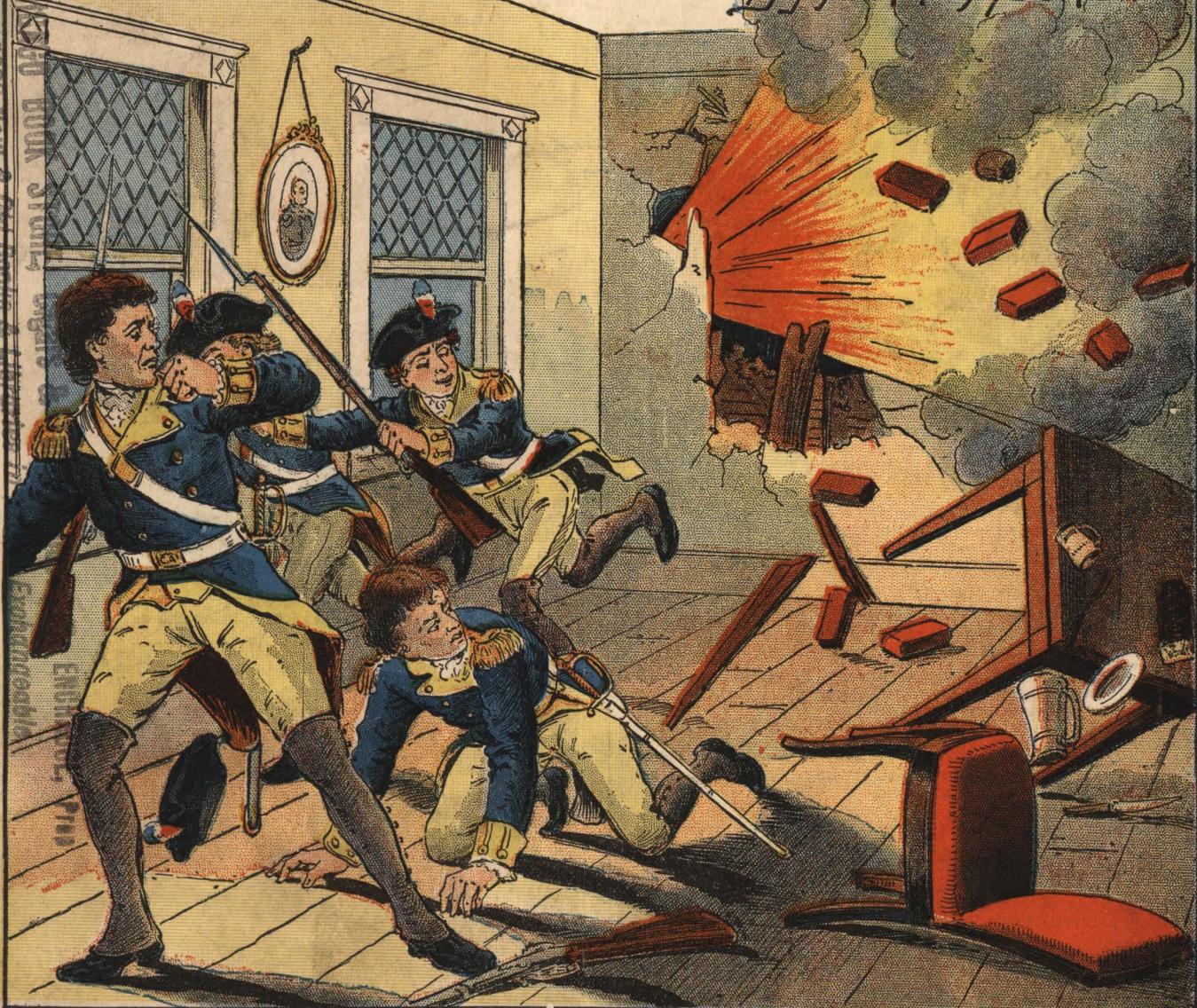
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CHAPTER I.

A BOLD SINGER.

One September afternoon of the year 1779, six British troopers were riding along a road leading westward from Savannah, in Georgia. The troopers were in a lively mood, and were laughing, talking, joking and singing.

The country hereabouts was thickly timbered, and on each side of the road the only fence was the trees of the forest. The road twisted and turned like some huge snake, and it was impossible to see more than a hundred yards or so in either direction. Suddenly one of the redcoats, who wore a captain's uniform, lifted his hand warningly, and said: "Hark!"

All became silent, and listened. A voice—a powerful and musical voice, was heard singing; and while the singer was not yet visible, the words of his song could be plainly heard. They were evidently improvised by the singer, and ran as follows:

"King George, he is a tyrant bold,
A tyrant sure is he:
All he wants is to get our gold
And carry it o'er the sea.
But Americans are going to keep their gold,
They want no king, you see;
Than George the Seventh, they are more bold,
And in time they will be free!

So down with the king!
Down with the king!
Down with the king, I say!"

The redcoats listened to the singing, and then looked at one another with varying expression on their faces. The majority were angry, and their faces were red, and their eyes flashed; but one or two seemed scarcely to know whether to get mad or to laugh.

"That fellow is a bold one!" growled one, drawing his sword.

"He certainly is," from another.

"Right," from a third; "else he would not dare be singing such a song in that loud fashion."

"Well," growled another, "we will stop that singing!"

"That we will! We will make him sing out of the other side of his mouth!"

The redcoats all drew swords, and halting their horses stood awaiting the coming of the singer.

They had not long to wait. A few moments later a horseman came riding around a bend in the road at a point not fifty yards distant.

The redcoats looked at the newcomer with interest. They noted that he was a large man and that he was dressed in the clothes such as were worn in that region by farmers, and their lips curled with disdain.

"A country bumpkin!" growled one.

"A boor!" from another.

"We'll trim his ears off and split that treasonous tongue of his!" declared a third.

The newcomer ceased singing when he saw the redcoats in the road in front of him, but he did not stop or show alarm in any way. He rode forward until within a few yards of the six troopers who were stretched across the road, and then he paused and looked from one to another, inquiringly.

"Good afternoon, friends!" he said pleasantly, bowing.

"We are no friends of yours, judging by the song you were just singing!" cried Captain Sanger, whose face was red with anger.

If he thought to frighten or awe the stranger by speaking fiercely he made a mistake, for the newcomer only smiled and said: "So you heard me? I think that a good song, don't you?"

"Think it a good song!" roared the captain. "I think one who would sing such a treasonous song as that ought to be hung to the nearest tree!"

"Is that so?" was the cool reply.

"Yes, it is!"

"Well, I must say that I differ with you."

"You differ with me?" The captain was so surprised

at the other's calmness that he hardly knew what to think or say.

"Yes, I differ with you. I think that is a fine song, and if you fellows like, I will teach it to you."

"What!" gasped the captain, while a chorus of threatening exclamations escaped the lips of the others.

"You insolent hound!"

"You boor!"

"You rebel dog!"

"Your tongue ought to be cut off!"

The man, for he was perhaps twenty-two years of age, looked from one to another of the redcoats as they uttered the exclamations, and a peculiar, quizzical smile appeared on his face. He did not seem to be at all worried on account of the epithets which had been applied to him, or by the angry and threatening looks of the troopers.

"Don't get angry about it, boys!" he said, in a tone that might or might not be soothing; "you could do worse than learn that song. It's a fine one, I think."

"See here," said Captain Sanger; "what is your name?"

"Henry Tyrrell."

"Henry Tyrrell, eh?"

"Yes; but most people call me 'Happy Hank.' "

"Happy Hank, eh?"

"Yes."

"Because you are such a singer, I suppose?"

"Yes; and I'm a good-natured sort of fellow, anyway."

"You are good-natured, eh?"

"Yes."

"Kind of a poet, too, aren't you?"

"Well, nothing to speak of."

"I heard you singing, just now. The words sounded as if they might have been made up by yourself. Is that the case?"

"Yes, I made up those words."

"I thought so; and now I'll tell you what I want you to do."

"Go ahead," with a smile.

The troopers looked at their commander inquiringly. They handled their weapons as if they were anxious to use them. It is probable that the majority did not approve of the delay in teaching the insolent stranger a lesson.

"I want you to make up a verse praising King George, and sing it in place of the words you were just singing, which were so rankly treasonous!"

Happy Hank shook his head. "I can't do it," he said.

"Why not?" The captain's voice was threatening.

"Well, you see, for one thing, I can't make up words offhand. It takes some time. I was a whole day making up the words you just heard me singing."

"You could have been in better business!" growled one of the troopers.

"Which is none of your business!" was the quick retort.

"Oh, let me at him, captain!" pleaded the trooper waving his sword in the air and glaring at the young man fiercely.

"Yes, let him at me, captain!" said Happy Hank calmly. "Just let him at me and see me carve him up into mincemeat!" As the young man spoke he drew his long sword and made a stroke at an imaginary enemy.

"Put up that sword!" ordered Captain Sanger, sternly. "Put it up or we will make mincemeat of you!"

"Oh, all right!" was the careless reply, and Tyrrel placed his sword back in its scabbard, which had not been noted by the redcoats until after the weapon was drawn and the hilt of the sword having been under the coat, they had not suspected that the young man was armed. They began to think that possibly the fellow was not the simple farmer they had supposed him to be.

"Now make up the words and sing them!" ordered Captain Sanger.

"You wish me to make up some words praising King George?" was the slow, deliberate query.

"Yes."

"You must not ask me to do that, captain."

"Why not?"

"Because you are asking the impossible."

"How is it impossible?"

"Why, there is absolutely nothing that could be said in praise of King George—so how could I make up words praising him?"

A curse escaped the lips of the captain, while exclamations of rage were given utterance to by the others.

"Kill the insolent dog, captain!"

"He is the most impudent rebel I have ever seen!"

"He is too bold-spoken altogether!"

"Cut his villainous tongue off!"

The men handled their swords nervously and were evidently eager to get at the bold speaker. They looked at the captain for the signal to make an attack, but the officer was not yet ready to set the men on the patriot.

"You must make up some words and sing them!" he said, with a determined air. "I have made up my mind to that effect, and I am a man who generally has his way."

"And you are determined that I shall sing for you?" asked Happy Hank, coolly.

"Yes; you must do it or die!"

"All right; here goes, then. All join in the chorus:

"King George, he is a tyrant bold,
A tyrant sure is—"

"Here, stop that!" almost shouted Captain Sanger; "if you utter another word of that rot I will run you through!"

"Well, that's all you'll get me to sing!" was the quiet reply. "You will hear no song of praise for King George going up from these lips!"

"You refuse to do what I tell you, then, you cursed rebel?" almost shrieked the captain.

"I do."

"Your life shall pay the forfeit!" warningly.

"I am not so sure of that," was the calm reply.

The redcoats stared. "Why, we are six to one!" the captain cried. "What chance would you have against us?"

"Oh, I don't need much chance against such fellows as you!"

This was said with such an air of disdain that the redcoats were rendered furious, and even Captain Sanger, who had said he was determined to make the patriot sing a song of praise for King George, forgot his words and yelled to his men to cut the "rebel" down.

But the troopers were to be treated to a surprise. The man had his sword out in an instant and with one flashing sweep, off went the head of one of the redcoats. Then uttering a thrilling cry the man attacked the troopers with such terrible fury that in spite of the fact that they were five to one they were forced to recoil. They had never seen anything like it. Happy Hank was a giant in strength, and quick as the lightning flash in his movements; and in an instant, almost, he had disarmed two of the troopers, cut down two more, and would have made a clean sweep of them all had not the captain and the two unarmed men taken refuge in flight.

Even then they were not to escape, however. After them dashed Happy Hank, and as he was mounted on a splendid horse he quickly overhauled the fugitives.

"Surrender!" he called out to the first trooper he overtook, but the man turned and fired a pistol almost in his face. "So be it!" cried Tyrrell, grimly; "if you want war to the death you shall have it!" Then swish! went the long-bladed sword and off into the ditch at the roadside went the trooper's head, while the trunk tumbled over and one foot hanging in the stirrup, was dragged along with the flying horse.

The captain and the other trooper were looking back and saw the fate of their comrade. It made their blood run cold with horror.

"He is a demon!" cried the captain, his face ghastly pale.

"A regular fiend!" chattered the trooper, pale as a ghost.

Closer and closer came the pursuer, and when within a few yards of the two he cried out, fiercely: "Surrender, or die!"

The two looked at each other. "We had better surrender, I think," said Captain Sanger; "we are dead men if we don't!"

"I guess y-you a-are right about t-that!" was the chattering reply. The trooper was terrified. He had never been so frightened when in the midst of a battle as he was at this instant when pursued by a single man.

"We surrender!" called out the captain.

"You are wise. Stop your horses!"

The two managed to bring their horses to a stop, though it was difficult, as they were badly frightened by the other horse which went tearing past, dragging its terrible load. It is doubtful if their horses were much more terrified than were the two redcoats, however. Indeed, so weak were they that this had a good deal to do with their inability to quickly bring their animals down to a slow gait and ultimately to a stop. They did succeed finally, however, and they found the terrible patriot within arm's length of them.

"Throw your weapons down into the road!" cried Happy Hank, whose face was as fierce now as it had been smiling and serene before hostilities commenced.

The redcoats tossed their swords to the ground.

"Now your pistols!" in an angry tone; "don't think to try any tricks with me!"

The two hastened to obey, throwing their pistols down beside the swords. "We didn't intend to try playing any tricks," said the captain.

"Perhaps not; but you redcoated scoundrels are not to be trusted."

It was evident that Tyrrell did not have a very high opinion of the British soldiers. He sat and looked at the two for a few moments in silence.

"Well," he said presently, "what do you think about me singing something in praise of King George now, captain? I guess you have given up the idea of making me do it, eh?" Tyrrell smiled grimly as he spoke.

"I didn't know you were a demon, or I should not have given you any chance!" said the captain, viciously.

"I don't doubt that at all. You redcoats never give any one a chance if you can help it."

"What are you going to do with us?"

"That is just what I am considering."

"Oh!"

Tyrrell was silent for some moments, during which time he kept a wary eye on the two, for he thought it possible that they might still have a pistol or two secreted, and try a shot at him if his attention was distracted. While he was sitting there, thinking, there came the sound of hoofbeats, and around a bend in the road galloped a magnificent black charger, and mounted on the animal was a handsome, bronzed-faced young man of perhaps twenty years of age. He reined up his horse when within five yards of the little group and looked the three over curiously and searchingly.

"Hello! what's all this?" he asked. "What is going on here, anyway?"

Henry Tyrrell made no reply until after he had whipped out a pistol and leveled it at the newcomer, and then he said: "My name is Henry Tyrrell, sometimes known as 'Happy Hank,' and I have been having a little difficulty with some redcoats."

"I judged that some one had," was the quiet reply; "I met a horse running wild, up the road a ways, and the headless trunk of a British trooper was hanging to one of the stirrups."

"Yes; he refused to surrender—answered my summons to do so with a pistol shot, and I cut his head off. But who are you, stranger? Not one who will try to interfere with me in any way, I hope, for you are a likely-looking chap and I should hate to be forced to put a bullet through you!"

"I don't think there will be any necessity for us to quarrel, Mr. Tyrrell," was the quiet reply; "if indications go for anything we should be the best of friends and allies, for you appear to be an enemy of the British."

"I am their enemy, there is no doubt about that; and if I do say it myself, I don't think they have a worse enemy in these parts. But who are you, sir? What is your name?"

"Dick Slater."

CHAPTER II.

A SINGING LESSON.

Exclamations escaped the lips of Tyrrell, and of the two redcoats as well. It was evident that they had heard the name before.

"You don't mean to say that you are Dick Slater, the great scout, spy and captain of the company of youth known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' do you?" cried Happy Hank.

"I am the only Dick Slater that I have ever heard of," with a smile; "and I am a patriot scout, spy and am also the captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76.'"

"Glory!" cried Tyrrell; "I am indeed glad to make your acquaintance, Dick Slater!"

"And I am as glad to make your acquaintance."

But the two redcoats did not look pleased. They stared at the young man, who had proclaimed himself to be Dick Slater, with interest; but it was evident that they were not particularly well pleased to have him there. When he had first appeared they had hoped that he might turn out to be a friend to them, but this hope was now dashed. He was an enemy and at least as dangerous as the man who had made them prisoners.

"I am trying to think what I shall do with these two fellows," explained Tyrrell; "I don't want to be bothered with prisoners and I hate to turn them loose."

"It is for you to say; they are your prisoners," said Dick.

Tyrrell pondered a few moments and then the stern look left his face and a grim smile appeared thereon. "I know what I will do," he said to Dick; "you see, I got into trouble with these fellows—there were six of them there are three more of them lying back up the road ways—through singing a song in which I did not speak very well of King George, and now I can get even with the captain here by making him sing the song. He tried to make me sing a song praising the king and I refused but I don't think he will dare refuse to sing when I command him to do so!"

"I protest!" said Captain Sanger; "I shall not sing that song."

"You will sing it!" sternly.

"I can't sing. I never sang a song in my life."

"Then you are going to make a beginning right here!"
"I won't do it!"

"You will do it—or die! Take your choice."

Tyrrell spoke calmly, but with deadly determination. There was no doubt in the minds of the hearers regarding whether or not he meant what he said.

"I don't know the words," said Captain Sanger.

"I'll teach them to you; or, rather, I will say each line over and then you will sing it while the words are fresh in your mind. Are you ready?"

A groan was the only response. Dick Slater could hardly keep from laughing; he had never seen a more

lugubrious countenance on any person than that of the captain.

"Ready, captain!" said Tyrrell, sharply. "Listen carefully, now, and try to get both the words and tune." Then he sang one verse of the song, "King George, he is a tyrant bold! Sing!" he commanded.

The captain looked to the right and to the left and ahead, as if contemplating making a break for liberty, but he evidently decided it would not do to try it, for he stifled a groan and lifting up his voice went over the words in a sing-song way that required a great stretch of the imagination to dignify it with the name of singing.

"Good—splendid!" cried Tyrrell, approvingly. "You seem to enter into the spirit of the song, captain; I congratulate you!"

This was satire, of course, but it made the captain more angry, and he grew red in the face and swelled up till he seemed on the point of bursting.

"Now the second line, captain!" cried Tyrrell; and then he sang the second line and Captain Sanger repeated it in the same sing-song fashion he had used before.

"You are doing splendidly!" declared Tyrrell, and then he went clear through the verse, singing one line at a time and forcing the redcoat captain to sing it after him. And it was all Dick Slater could do to keep from laughing aloud, the redcoat made such hard work of the singing. No doubt it was hard for him, a born Briton, to sing a song so filled with treasonable expressions.

The patriot sat and gazed upon the red face of the perspiring redcoat for a few moments when the verse was finished, and there was a peculiar, quizzical expression in his eyes. At last he said: "Captain, I would advise you to learn that song. You sing it with such effect—doesn't he, Mr. Slater?" turning to Dick.

"Yes, indeed!" the youth replied; "he did splendidly."

"Of course he did! If you say so, captain, I will write the words down for you so you may learn them."

Captain Sanger was so angry he could hardly have spoken had he tried. Perhaps he feared to say what he would like to have said. He looked daggers, however; but it had no effect on Tyrrell other than to make him smile even more blandly.

"Oh, well, if you don't wish the words I shall not force them upon you," he said presently. Then he added: "I guess that I shall let you go this time. Go, now; but be careful in the future. If we meet again I may not let you escape."

The two were only too glad of the chance to go, and without a word they put spurs to their horses and rode up

the road at a gallop. They did not look back while in sight of the two patriots.

When they had disappeared from view, Tyrrell rode up beside Dick and extended his hand. "Shake hands!" he said; "I have often wished that I might take the hand of Dick Slater!"

"And I am proud to shake hands with one who has proven himself to be such a formidable foe of the British!" said Dick.

They shook hands, heartily, and as they were doing so a body of horsemen rode around the bend a hundred yards distant and dashed toward them, yelling at the top of their voices.

"There are the scoundrels!"

"There are the cowardly murderers!"

"Shoot the rebels!"

"Down with them!"

Such were a few of the cries.

CHAPTER III.

THE "WHIG WINNERS."

There were at least thirty of the newcomers, and that they were redcoats was evident for their brilliant, red uniforms proved this conclusively. It was also evident that they were bent on inflicting injury on the two patriots; and recognizing this fact the two hastened to get out of the way.

"Come!" cried Tyrrell; "follow me!" Then he rode into the timber at the side of the road and Dick followed closely. Just as they were disappearing there came the sound of a volley and the bullets whistled past at a great rate.

"Are you all right?" called out Tyrrell, without looking back. He had to watch where he was going in order to keep from being knocked off his horse by low-hanging limbs.

"All safe," was the reply.

"Good!" Then he rode onward for a few minutes in silence, Dick keeping close behind him. And behind them came the redcoats as they knew by the sound of the voices of the men.

Tyrrell evidently knew where he was going, however, and presently struck into a path which he followed nearly half a mile, when he suddenly emerged into an open space of perhaps ten or a dozen acres. Dick was close behind

and as he rode out into the opening and glanced about him an exclamation escaped him.

"Who are they?" he asked; he pointed to a party of perhaps twenty men, who were going through a series of military evolutions near the centre of the field.

"They call themselves the 'Whig Winners,'" replied Tyrrell. "They are young fellows of from sixteen to eighteen years, and they have banded together to protect the homes of the Whigs. The redcoats have done a great deal of deviltry, and some check is an absolute necessity."

"They seem to have some knowledge of military manœuvres; how does that happen?"

"Their commander is a young fellow who was in the patriot army three or four months. He was wounded and came home to get well and hasn't gone back. He is teaching them."

"Well, that's quite an idea."

"So it is; and now listen and see if you can hear anything of our pursuers."

They listened a few moments and heard the sound of voices in the direction from which they had just come.

"They are coming!" said Tyrrell.

"Yes; and now what do you say to giving them a surprise?"

"You mean——" he pointed toward the youths going through the military manœuvres.

"Yes; let's get them to help us discourage the enemy."

"I'm in for it; come!"

They galloped over to where the young men were and quickly explained what was wanted. The "Whig Winners" were right in for the adventure. It was just what they wanted, they declared, and readily placed themselves under the command of Dick Slater, of whom all had heard.

This was all that was necessary, and the youth began by giving orders for all to hasten over to the edge of the timber and take refuge behind the trees. "There are at least thirty of the redcoats," he said, "and I don't think it would be wise for us to meet them in the open."

They hastened across the open and reached the edge of the timber and concealed themselves a few moments before the redcoats put in an appearance.

The entire party of troopers had followed Dick and Tyrrell. There were thirty of them at least and they made a brave showing dressed up in their brilliant uniforms. Dick looked at the youths to see how they were affected by the sight, and was pleased to note that they did not seem to be frightened. Indeed, an intense eagerness was all he could see expressed in their faces, and he said to himself that they would fight like Turks.

The redcoats came to a stop near the centre of the clearing and looked about them and conversed excitedly. It was evident that they were at a loss to know what to do or which way to go. While they were thus engaged Dick said to the youths: "I am going to step out and challenge the redcoats. They will, in all probability, dash across the clearing at full speed, straight this way, and when I give the order I want you to take good aim; and when I say 'Fire!' let them have it. Will you do as I have said?"

"Yes, yes!" was the reply, in subdued tones, for they were not very far from the enemy.

Dick then stepped out from among the trees and stood in full view of the redcoats. "Here we are!" he called out, in a loud, defiant voice; "here we are! Come and take us if you can!"

The troopers turned their gaze toward the bold speaker and stared at him in open-mouthed amazement. They were not so far away but that their expression could almost be seen, and their underjaws were hanging low. They did not jump at the bait, however; something seemed to warn them that in doing so they would get themselves into trouble. They had had considerable experience with the patriots since coming to America, and had learned to have considerable respect for their shrewdness.

"I'm inclined to think it a trap," said one of the redcoats. He was a major, as his uniform proved.

"I shouldn't wonder if you were right, sir," said one of the men.

"But there were only two of them," said another.

"Perhaps they have run across some comrades," another shrewdly conjectured.

"That is probable, or that fellow would never dare do what he has done," the major admitted.

They hardly knew what to do; but sat there and looked toward the youth standing so boldly in view and talked the matter over.

"There is a good chance that there is nobody there but the two," said one skeptically inclined trooper; "these rebels are bold and audacious rascals and do things you wouldn't think of their doing."

"That is true, too," admitted the major; "but I can't think the fellow would have shown himself and challenged us so boldly if only the two were there."

"Nor I!" from another.

"You may wager that there is a crowd hidden in the edge of the timber waiting for us to come within range," said another, with a shrewd shake of the head.

"I don't believe they are going to accept your challenge, Dick," said Tyrrell, in a disappointed voice.

"It doesn't look like it," replied Dick.

"They suspect a trap, likely."

"I judge so."

"I didn't think they would be so careful."

"Neither did I. I supposed they would rush right at me as soon as I showed myself."

"They have doubtless had some experience and have learned that it doesn't pay to jump at every bait that is offered."

"Quite likely you are right."

Then Dick called out, tauntingly: "Well, aren't you going to come and take us?"

"We are not such fools as to allow ourselves to be led into a trap," was the reply.

"Oh, you think it a trap, do you?"

"Yes."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, the fact that you have appeared and challenged us so boldly."

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yes; you wouldn't have dared do that unless you had a force behind you."

"You think not?"

"I know it. There is a trap, but you won't catch us in it."

"I didn't think you British were such cowards!" said Dick, scathingly. He wished to goad them into making fools of themselves by rushing forward.

But the plan was not successful. "You can talk in that fashion all you like," the major called back; "we are not going to rush blindly into danger just to punish a rebel for talking saucy."

"Then you won't come and take us?"

"We are not fools, as I have already said."

"You are great cowards. For a very little we would come and take you!"

"That is all right; come ahead. We wish you would. If we can see how many there are of you we won't hesitate to meet you."

"Bah! you would run like scared rabbits!"

"Would we?" in a scornful voice.

"Yes!"

"Try us and see."

Dick turned toward Tyrrell and looked at him inquiringly.

"What do you think about it?" he asked.

"About charging them?"

"Yes."

Tyrrell looked at the youths and seemed to be weighing the matter in his mind. "What do you think about it, Frank?" he asked presently, addressing the commander of the "Whig Winners."

"I hardly know what to say," replied the youth; "you can see for yourself that the redcoats outnumber us; and they are on horseback and could run us down and trample us under foot."

"That's true," agreed Tyrrell.

"Yes," said Dick; "I fear it would not be wise to charge them."

Just as he finished speaking two girls came forth from the timber at the farther side of the clearing. They were looking at each other and talking, and had not yet seen the British troopers. They suddenly looked up and caught sight of the horsemen; and as they did so they gave vent to screams and turned and ran back into the timber. Their action attracted the attention of the redcoats, and five or six of the troopers turned their horses' heads and galloped across to the timber, and leaping to the ground they ran in the direction taken by the girls.

"We'll catch them and have some kisses, fellows!" cried one of the troopers.

The others replied with eager exclamations to the effect that that was just what they would do.

Frank Foster, the captain of the "Whig Winners," uttered an exclamation as the girls appeared to view, and then as quickly took to flight and disappeared.

"My sister Carrie and Daisy Denton!" he cried; and then, when the troopers started in pursuit, he exclaimed: "Come, everybody! We must head those scoundrels off and teach them a lesson!"

He led the way, all following, Dick and Tyrrell bringing up the rear, leading their horses. They skirted the clearing, keeping far enough back in the timber so that they could not be seen by the redcoats in the centre of the opening, and were soon around on the farther side. Here they struck out in pursuit of the six troopers who were pursuing the girls.

They had gone perhaps a third of a mile when a girl's scream was heard, followed quickly by still another.

"Forward!" cried Frank Foster. "Forward! and kill those scoundrelly redcoats!"

A few moments later they came in sight of a scene which made their blood boil. In the centre of a little glade stood the two maidens, surrounded by the six redcoats, who were quarreling among themselves as to which should be the first to kiss the girls.

The party of youths burst out into the glade like an avalanche. "Kill the cowardly scoundrels!" roared Frank. "Cut them down!"

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL PREVOST IS ANGRY.

The troopers were taken by surprise, but had presence of mind enough to know enough to run for their lives. After them dashed the youths, and as soon as they were past the girls, and could do so without being in danger of hurting the maidens, the young fellows opened fire upon the fleeing redcoats.

At the first fire two of the troopers went down, and with yells of delight and triumph the "Whig Winners" dashed onward after the others, still firing. Two more were brought down, and then being out of loaded firearms the youths had to wait till they overtook the fugitives before inflicting further damage.

The two troopers were badly frightened and ran like deer. They knew that four of their comrades had gone down, and realized that if they fell into the hands of their pursuers their fate would be sealed. Naturally, under such circumstances, they ran as they had never run before, and although the youths were good runners they could not overhaul the fugitives, who succeeded in making a circuit and getting back to the clearing and rejoining their comrades.

"What does this mean?" asked the major as the two panting fugitives reached the spot. "Where are the others?"

"Dead!" replied one of the troopers, looking back over his shoulder as if fearful that he would see some pursuers close at hand.

"Dead?" exclaimed the major.

"Yes."

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do mean it," decidedly; "they were shot down like dogs."

"Who by?"

"A gang of demons!"

"How many were there of them, do you think?"

"I couldn't say, exactly; I judge there were twenty to thirty of them, though."

"Humph! I knew that was a trap when that young scoundrel stood out and so boldly challenged us."

"But can't we go and get revenge on them for killing the boys?" asked one of the two survivors, pantingly, and with an angry, vicious look on his face.

"And run into an ambush and get half our number shot down?" remarked the major, scathingly. "I guess we shall do nothing of the kind; and as for you fellows you should have known better than to do what you did. It serves you right for your foolishness. It may stop you from running after every pretty girl you see."

"I shall think twice before I do so again!" declared one of the two.

"And so shall I!" from the other.

Just then a youth appeared at the edge of the clearing. It was Frank Foster, and he called out: "Four of your men lie dead about a quarter of a mile from here in the timber. We are going away now and you may look after the bodies and give them burial. I give you fair warning, however, that if you try to follow us or harm us in any way we will make you sorry for it! Do you understand?"

"Yes, we understand," replied the major; "and now I wish to tell you something, you young rebel, and it is this: That we shall make you suffer for what you have done. You will be made to understand that the lives of British soldiers are not so cheap as to be at the command of a gang of young scoundrels like you!"

"And let me tell you, Sir Redcoat, that when your scoundrelly troopers go out of their way to insult our sisters and sweethearts, we shall take their lives as ruthlessly as though they were mad dogs. We glory in having killed four of your men and we will kill more if you bother us in the future!"

"That will do! I have heard enough of your threats!" cried the major.

"Very well; but you will do well to remember what I have said!" then the youth disappeared.

The redcoats waited half an hour and then entered the timber and made their way to the clearing where the encounter had taken place—or rather where the "Whig Winners" had given chase to the troopers, and at the edge of which glade two of them had been shot down—and the two dead soldiers were buried, a hole having been made with swords, which were fair makeshifts for spades. Then the other two were found and buried, after which the party made its way back to the big clearing, and mounting, set out on its return to Savannah.

As soon as they reached the city Major Montfort went to headquarters and made his report.

When General Prevost learned that four troopers had

been killed by a band of youths he was wild with anger. "I have just received a report from Captain Sanger," he said, "to the effect that four of our men were killed by a demon who called himself 'Happy Hank,' and I have no doubt he is one of the main ones in this band of youths you speak of."

"I have no doubt of it, general," was the reply; "but did Captain Sanger say that one man killed those four troopers?"

"Yes, one man."

"Why, that is wonderful! He must be a demon, sure enough!"

"He certainly is. He calls himself 'Happy Hank,' as I have said; but he said his name was Tyrrell, and I should call him 'Tyrrell, the Terrible,' if I were naming him."

"That would be more appropriate, I should think. But why does he call himself 'Happy Hank?'"

"Because he is usually singing, I judge. Sanger tells me that when they first encountered him he was singing a most treasonous song about King George, the king being denounced in the words of the song at a terrible rate."

"He is an impudent scoundrel, then, as well as a dangerous man."

"Impudent is no name for it! And, Major, something must be done toward discouraging him and this band of young fellows under him, and forcing them to behave themselves."

"I think something should be done, General."

"Would you like the work, Major?"

"Yes, indeed!" eagerly. "I should enjoy it. I will own up that I am eager to see this 'Terrible Tyrrell,' and if possible I shall cross swords with him."

General Provost shook his head. "Sanger says he is a fiend with the sword, Major."

The major smiled superciliously.

"Sanger is no swordsman, and so is no judge of such things, General; in fact, if I may say it, there is not my equal with the sword in the entire garrison, and if I can get this country boor up in front of me I will quickly put a stop to his career."

"But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, they say, Major, and Sanger says this Tyrrell killed four of the men in fair and open combat."

"Pish, General! Sanger and his men were frightened, and, as I have just said, none of them knew anything of the way to use a sword, and I will wager that the rebel took them by surprise."

"Well, I don't know whether he took them by sur-

prise or not, but if he did, it was their fault, for they were trying to force him to sing a song praising King George, and should have been on their guard."

"Well, let me have fifty men, and I will go out and see what I can do, General," said the major.

"Very well; take the men, and if you can capture or kill this fellow Tyrrell, and burst up the band of youths who have been doing this deviltry, you shall not lose by it."

"Very well; I will do it, or my name isn't Montford."

The major saluted and withdrew. It was now supper time, but as soon as the meal was ended he selected fifty men, and when this was done, he ordered them to mount and follow him.

Fifteen minutes later the troopers went galloping out of Savannah, bent on capturing "Terrible Tyrrell," and scattering the band of "Whig Winners."

CHAPTER V.

THE GIRL NEWS-BEARER.

As soon as he got through talking with Major Montford, Frank Foster returned to where his companions, the "Whig Winners," were awaiting him, and they made their way back to the little glade where they had left the girls and Dick Slater and Henry Tyrrell.

Dick and Tyrrell had stopped, as they had their horses to look after, and they knew there was no necessity for them to accompany the youths in their pursuit of the redcoats, anyway, as they outnumbered the fugitives so greatly they would be able to handle them without trouble.

Tyrrell was, so Dick saw at once, well acquainted with the girls, and he introduced his companion. Dick acknowledged the introduction, and thought as he did so that he had rarely seen two more beautiful girls than Carrie Foster and Daisy Denton.

It did not take Dick long to make a discovery, and that was that Tyrrell and Carrie were lovers. Their looks and actions proved this, and so he turned his attention to Daisy Denton, for the purpose of allowing the lovers all the opportunity they wished for enjoying each other's society.

Daisy Denton was a lively, jolly girl, and she kept poking fun at the two. They took it good-naturedly, and Dick could not help enjoying the situation.

"Oh, Mr. Slater, it must be nice to be in love, and

have a sweetheart!" exclaimed Daisy, with a mischievous smile and an inclination of the head toward Tyrrell and Carrie.

"That's all right, Daisy," said Carrie, shaking her fist at the girl; "if Frank comes back here and finds you talking to Mr. Slater and smiling upon him you'll catch it. She's in love with my brother, Mr. Slater, so she needn't say anything."

"Indeed!" smiled Dick. "Now that is too bad! I was thinking that there might be a chance for me."

"You mustn't believe everything a girl tells you, Mr. Slater," said Daisy demurely, and with a coquettish smile.

Dick laughed. "I am a very prudent chap," he said; "and so I think I shall wait and see which way the wind blows before making any attempt at winning hearts. Miss Foster's brother is away, killing fellows for wanting to kiss you, and I don't want to get my name on his list."

The girls both laughed at this. Then the conversation went on until the return of the youths, when all moved away through the timber. Dick and Tyrrell brought up the rear, leading their horses, and after fifteen minutes' walking a road was reached. Turning down the road they proceeded in the new direction a distance of half a mile, when a large house was reached. There was a good-sized barn, too, and other out-buildings, and everything seemed to indicate that the owner of the place was well-to-do.

This was the home of Frank and Carrie Foster, and was the headquarters for the band of "Whig Winners." The youths dispersed to their homes, which were in the vicinity, within a radius of three miles, and as it was now getting well along toward evening Frank invited Dick and Tyrrell to remain and take supper.

They decided to accept the invitation, and Dick, who was down here in the vicinity of Savannah on a special mission, made up his mind that he would remain longer, if permitted to do so—and he had no doubts regarding this, as the Southerners were very hospitable.

It was only about a quarter of a mile over to the home of Daisy Denton, but Frank excused himself to Dick and walked home with the girl. Carrie introduced Dick to her father and mother and younger sister Lucy, and soon the youth was feeling very much at home, for Thomas Foster was a genial, jolly-hearted man, who knew how to make his guests feel at ease.

He looked grave when the story of the encounters with the redskins was told him, and his wife likewise looked sober.

"I fear we are going to see trouble before very long," Mr. Foster said. "The British will not be willing to let

matters rest as they are. They will want to have revenge for the killing of eight of their comrades."

"I fear you are right, Thomas," said his wife.

"I think myself that there is likely to be trouble," agreed Tyrrell; "and I am of the opinion that it will be well for the boys to be ready to get together at an instant's notice, so as to repel the British if they come down here for the purpose of getting revenge for the killing of their men."

"But they will likely send a force so strong that it would be suicide for the boys to attempt to cope with it," said Mr. Foster, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, I hardly think they will send a very large force," said Dick. "They will look upon the youths as being mere boys, and will imagine that fifty or seventy-five troopers will be able to easily scatter them to the four winds."

"Well, such a force could do it, could it not?" asked Mr. Foster.

Dick shook his head. "I hardly think so, if the boys are properly handled," he said. "Of course, it would be necessary that they fought on the defensive, and forced the redcoats to do the offensive work, thus exposing them."

"Goodness! I wish you would remain here and give the boys the benefit of your knowledge of warfare and military tactics, Mr. Slater," said Mrs. Foster.

"So do I," declared her husband. "Frank has been in the army, and knows a little about such things, but not enough; but if you were to remain here and take command of the boys they would be enabled to do good work, I am sure."

"Well, I think I can remain a while," said Dick. "I am down here on a mission which requires that I stay here in this vicinity for a while. I am the bearer of a message from the commander-in-chief to General Lincoln, and I learn that he is not in this vicinity, but will be here in a few days; so it is as well that I wait for him, as he will get here almost as quick as I could get to him, perhaps quicker, for I might miss him on the road."

"Good! Stay here with us, Mr. Slater," exclaimed Mr. Foster. "We will feed you well, and take the very best of care of you."

"All right; I will stay, and if I can be of any benefit to you people I shall be glad."

"I guess I will stay a few days, too, Mr. Foster," said Tyrrell. "If there is any likelihood that there will be fighting to do, I want to be on hand."

"You are welcome to stay as long as you like," said Mr. Foster.

Tyrrell glanced toward Carrie, and she gave him a smile

which said as plainly as words could have done that she would be glad to have him stay, so he thanked Mr. Foster, and said he would stay a day or two, anyway, and see what turned up."

"I am partly to blame for the trouble, if any comes," he said, "as I killed four of the redcoats, and if they come down here it will be to look for me as much as anything else."

When supper was ready all sat up to the table and ate heartily. They had just finished when they heard the sound of rapid hoofbeats, and as they stepped out on the piazza to see who was riding at such speed they saw a woman approaching as fast as her horse could gallop. The moon was up, and it was possible to see quite plainly.

"I wonder who she is?" remarked Mrs. Foster.

"It is Cousin Alice!" suddenly cried Carrie. "It is Cousin Alice, from Savannah! Something must be wrong at home, or she wouldn't be riding so fast."

They all hastened down to the gate, and as Dick Slater stepped forward to assist the rider to dismount, she having brought her horse to a stop, the girl—for she was not more than seventeen—called out excitedly:

"The redcoats are coming! They will be here within the hour."

CHAPTER VI.

THE "WHIG WINNERS" ARE WINNERS.

Alice Jones was a beautiful girl, and her color was heightened now by her excitement and the thrilling ride she had made, and she was even more beautiful than usual.

Her aunt, Mrs. Foster, and her cousin, Carrie, both seized Alice at the same moment, and hugged and kissed her as well as they could when both were at it at the same time, and then they began questioning the girl.

"The redcoats are very angry on account of some of their men having been killed out in this neighborhood this afternoon," the girl explained. "Father heard that a party was being made up to come out here and hunt up the persons who did the killing of the men, and as soon as he told us at home I said I was going to come out and warn you, for I knew that Frank and a lot more of the neighbors' boys were the ones who had done the work, and I feared they might be taken unawares and shot down without being given a chance for their lives."

"What a brave girl you are, Alice!" exclaimed her aunt, in admiration.

"Weren't you afraid the redcoats would find out what you intended doing, and make you trouble?" asked Carrie.

"No. I didn't think of anything, save to get here and give you warning. And now you haven't much time to lose. Frank and Mr. Tyrrell and this other gentleman had better get away as quickly as possible, for if the redcoats find them here it may go hard with them. Father said the British were especially angry at you, Mr. Tyrrell."

"I judged they would be," with a smile; then he turned to Dick. "What do you advise?" he asked.

"I think it would be advisable for us to get away from here for the time being, and we might get the 'Whig Winners' together and give the redcoats a fight."

"That is a good plan. Well, we will go at once; but do you think it safe to leave the folks unprotected here?"

"Well, you see, we couldn't do a great deal, anyway; so the best thing we can do is to go and get the youths together and try to get back here and engage the redcoats in battle before they have much time to do damage."

"We can get them together in an hour," said Frank Foster. "I have arranged a series of signals, and we will make the signals and wait till the boys come."

The three bade the folks good-by, and hastened away. Alice went into the house with her aunt and cousin, who said she must remain all night, while Mr. Foster took her horse and put it in the stable.

Dick, Tyrrell and Frank Foster made their way to the top of a high hill about three-quarters of a mile from Mr. Foster's house, and then Frank fired off a series of rifle shots. When he had finished he turned to his companions and said:

"The boys will be here in three-quarters of an hour."

"All of them?" asked Dick eagerly.

"Every one of them."

"If they do get here in that time we will hasten back to your father's house, Frank, and attack the redcoats, if they are there, and if they have not yet arrived when we get there we will give them a reception they are not expecting."

"That is a good idea," agreed Tyrrell.

The time passed rather slowly, but not more than twenty minutes had passed when the boys began arriving. They were the ones who lived closest, of course, but the others continued coming, and by the time the three-quarters of an hour was up they were all on hand.

"I turn them over to you, Mr. Slater," said Frank. "You

are in command, and whatever you say for us to do, that we will do."

"All right, and I thank you, Frank. We will head for your father's house at once. I hope we may reach there ahead of the redcoats."

They set out at once, and hastened toward Frank's home. As they drew near to the house they moved slowly, and made as little noise as possible. While yet a hundred yards from the house Dick called a halt, and stole forward to investigate.

They had approached from the rear, and the youths were hidden behind the stable, but when Dick reached the rear of the house he heard loud voices around in front, and stealing to the corner of the building, he looked around.

In the front yard were a score or more of redcoats, with more than as many more sitting on horseback out in the road. The redcoats in the yard had called Mr. Foster out of doors, and were now engaged in putting him through a cross-examination.

Dick saw this much, and hastened back to where he had left the youths. He quickly explained the situation to them, and then they stole forward. Dick had hoped that they would be able to take the redcoats by surprise, but it happened that one of the men had wandered to the corner of the house and glanced around it, and had seen the party approaching.

He gave the alarm instantly, and there was a great hue and cry. The redcoats, not knowing how large a force might be about to attack them, hastened out of the yard and started to mount their horses.

At this instant the band of "Whig Winners" rushed around the corner and poured a volley into the ranks of the redcoats. Wild yells of pain and rage escaped the lips of the troopers, and seeing that the force opposed to them was smaller than their own, they took heart and quickly drew their pistols. Dick had anticipated this action, however, and had ordered the youths to retreat back around the house. This they did, and managed to escape before the redcoats could fire.

The British now leaped to the ground, and headed by the major charged toward the house, with the intention of going around and attacking the youths. Indeed, they did rush around the corner like madmen, but they found no enemy awaiting them. Dick had played a sharp trick on them.

Surmising that this would be their action, and that they would come around the corner where they had seen the youths appear and disappear, the youth led the way

around the house, and as the redcoats appeared at the back Dick and the youths rushed around to the front, and darting out into the road, leaped into the saddles of as many horses as there were youths, and dashed away up the road, uttering wild yells of defiance.

The redcoats were wild with rage, and such of them as had horses mounted and started in pursuit. This, again, was just what Dick expected they would do, and what he wished they would do, and he and his companions went around the first bend in the road. Then he called a halt, and all leaped to the ground, and led the horses in among the trees at the side of the road. They just had time to draw their pistols, and then around the bend came the redeoats, spurring their horses to their topmost speed.

Crash—roar!

The youths poured a volley into the troopers, and emptied a number of saddles. The redcoats, seeing that they had ridden into a trap, dashed onward at the best speed of the horses. They had found the enemy, but wished that they had not.

Leaping into the saddles, the youths galloped back to the house, and when the redcoats saw them coming they took to their heels and ran for the timber.

Reaching the fence in front of the house the youths dismounted and tied the horses to the fence. Entering the yard they told Mr. Foster to tell the commander of the redcoat force that they could have their horses, if they would go away without attempting to do any deviltry in that part of the country. Mr. Foster said he would tell the British commander, and then the youths hastened away, going into the timber back of the stable.

Here they remained until they saw the redcoats all congregated in front of Mr. Foster's house, and then Dick and Tyrrell went and kept a wary watch on the redcoats, to see that they made no attempt to do anything out of the way. They were not inclined to attempt anything, however, and after burying their dead comrades, and placing the wounded in a wagon, which they borrowed of Mr. Foster, they took their departure.

The "Whig Winners" had been winners, sure enough, in their first real encounter with a force of redcoats, and they were delighted. Of course they gave Dick a great deal of the credit, but he told them that had they not done their part the affair would have been a failure, and even they could not fail to see this, and the realization made them feel good.

Four or five of the boys were wounded, only slightly, however, with the exception of one, who was taken care of in the home of the Fosters. All decided to remain at the

ster home the rest of the night, as they did not know if the redcoats might return. Pickets were placed out, and all precautions taken to prevent a surprise, but the redcoats did not put in an appearance.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAJOR DECIDES TO TRY AGAIN.

It was an angry and disgusted party of redcoats that drove and rode into Savannah at one o'clock that morning. Major Montford had been so confident that with twenty men he could scatter the band of youths to the four winds, and his own force had been treated in that fashion instead. Twelve of his men had been killed and eight wounded, and he shrank from facing General Provost and telling his report. It would have to be done, however, and he went to headquarters immediately after breakfast and made his report.

"You don't mean to tell me that you ran into a trap, and that twelve of your men were killed and eight wounded?" exclaimed General Provost, staring at the major in amazement and consternation, not unmixed with anger.

The major bowed, a sullen look on his face. "That is what happened, sir," he replied.

"Where did this happen?"

"At a farmhouse about four miles from the city."

"Whose house was it?"

"A man named Foster, I believe."

"Humph! Doubtless he was mixed up in the affair in some manner."

"I don't know; he was at the house all the time, and if had anything to do with the affair, it was by proxy."

"Likely he has a son or sons who were members of the party that attacked you."

"It is possible, though I cannot say so of my own knowledge."

General Provost was silent a few moments, and then said:

"How do you suppose the scoundrels knew you were in neighborhood?"

Major Montford shook his head. "I can hardly guess," he replied, "unless some one went from the city and gave them warning."

"That would have been possible."

"Yes, and probable. There are lots of rebels in Savannah."

"I have no doubt you are right; but they keep very quiet."

"Yes; they are wise enough to keep their sentiments to themselves."

"And it is a good thing for them that they do."

General Provost's tone was savage, and it was evident that he was capable of treating rebels harshly, if he were to get the chance.

After a few moments of silence, during which time he was pondering, he looked at the major and said: "I suppose you wish to have another try at these rascally rebels?"

"Yes, sir, I do," was the reply; "and this time I wish to take a sufficient force along so that they will not dare try to play any tricks."

"Take as many men as you like; and whatever you do, give the young scoundrels a lesson that will last them a lifetime."

"I shall do so, never fear."

Then the major saluted and withdrew. He went at once to his quarters, and started a couple of troopers to select his men. "I want two hundred," he said. "Pick good men, too, who will fight to the death, if necessary. I have carte blanche from General Provost."

"All right, major," was the reply, and the two hastened away to select the two hundred men.

The major himself left his quarters and walked down the street till he arrived in the suburbs of the city. He entered the yard in front of a two-story house standing well back from the sidewalk, and advancing to the front door, knocked upon it. The door was opened presently by a woman, who returned the major's salutation with a cold nod.

"Ah, Mrs. Jones, good morning," was the officer's greeting. "I wish to see Miss Alice, if you please."

But the woman—who was no other than the mother of Alice Jones, who came out to Mr. Foster's and gave warning of the coming of the British, as we have seen—did not open the door wider.

"Alice is not at home," she said.

"Not at home?" The major seemed surprised.

"No."

"Um—ah, if I may ask, where is she?"

"She is—in the country." There was a slight hesitation in Mrs. Jones' manner.

"Ah! Where did she go?"

A slight frown came over the woman's face. Evidently she was not altogether pleased by the major's insistence.

Still, as they were patriots, and were within the British lines, it behooved her to be careful and not anger the officer if she could avoid it, so she said: "She went away last evening."

The major started. "After I was here?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Of course; I might of known that; but is she in the habit of riding into the country after nightfall?"

"She has done so frequently, when it is moonlight. It is more pleasant than to go in the daytime, when the weather is hot, you know."

"So I should judge. Do you mind telling me where your daughter is visiting?"

Again the woman hesitated, and then she said: "She is visiting at the home of a Mr. Foster."

The major started. "Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "Why, I was there last night myself, and saw nothing of her."

"Indeed! All I know is that she started to go there. I do not know that she reached there—although I hope she did, of course."

"She may have met with an accident on the road," suggested the major.

"I hope not," was the somewhat anxious reply. "Were you in the house at Mr. Foster's?"

The major said he was not. "She might have been there and I not have seen her," he explained, "for myself and men were attacked by some rebels, and had to take refuge in flight."

"Ah, indeed! That was bad!"

"So it was; but I am going back to-day with a sufficient force to crush the scoundrels—and I will do it, too! I will show them that they are dealing with one who is not to be trifled with."

The woman said nothing, and presently the major asked: "When will Miss Alice be back?"

"I don't know, sir; she may return to-day, and perhaps not for two or three days. Her relatives may not be willing to let her come so soon."

"Mr. Foster's folks are relatives, then?"

"Yes, sir; Mr. Foster is my brother."

"Ah! Well, I am going out that way again to-day, so may get a chance to see her."

Mrs. Jones made no reply, and after a moment's pause the major lifted his hat, and bowing took his departure.

"I hate that man—and fear him, too," said Mrs. Jones to herself, as she watched the officer walk away. "He is trying to make love to Alice, and she detests him, but he won't give up and stay away, although she has told him

a dozen times that she does not care to have him vi
her. Well, the visit he made here last evening, when told of his intended trip into the country in search of band of youths did us some good, for it enabled Alice go out and warn them that the redcoats were comi
I am sure she got there and gave them the warning, the major said they were attacked and forced to flee. I glad of it—but he says he is going again to-day. Wi
does that mean? I fear there is trouble in store for 'Whig Winners,' and for brother and his folks. I wish could get word to them that another force of redco
is coming."

She closed the door, and going into another room dressed her husband, telling him what the major i
said. "I wish we could send word to them that ano
force is coming," she said in conclusion.

"Let me go, mother!" cried ten-year-old Tom, eage

The parents of the boy looked at him dubiously; tl
they looked at each other inquiringly.

"It is very important that word be taken," said M
Jones tentatively.

"Let him go, then," said her husband. "Tom i
wide-awake, lively boy, and I think he will be able
get through the lines in safety."

"Of course I can get through the lines," he declar
"I would like to see the redcoat that can keep me fi
leaving the city if I make up my mind to do it."

"It will be difficult to get past on horseback," war
Mr. Jones.

"Not a bit of it, father. I know a way to get out of
city that isn't watched at all. It will take me a li
longer in reaching the open country than if I were to
the straight road, but it will be absolutely safe, and w
I do get out on the road I can make up for lost ti
Old Jim hasn't been out of the stable for several d
and will be ready for a lively run."

"Very well; go along, Tom," said his mother, and
boy gave utterance to an exclamation of delight and f
tened out of the house.

Ten minutes later he was riding through the str
of Savannah, and half an hour later, having succeeded
getting out into the country, he was riding westward
ward his uncle Foster's at a lively gallop.

Meanwhile, the major had gotten his men ready
ridden away at their head. The British force was
than a mile behind the boy, but the redcoats were not
ing as fast as was Tom, so he bade fair to get to the l
ter home half an hour ahead of the enemy.

When Tom rode up in front of the Fosters' house

ped to the ground all came running out to meet him. "What is it, Tom?" cried Alice. "Is—is anything wrong home? Has anything happened?"

"No, nothing has happened at home, Sis," the boy pried; "but something is liable to happen here pretty soon if you don't look out!"

"What do you mean? Explain!"

"The British are coming!" the boy cried. "They will be here before very long, and they are going to give it to the 'Whig Winners' this time, if they get a chance at them."

"How many of the redcoats are coming?" asked Dick later.

"I don't know; but there will be a big crowd of them, for the major was confident that they would be able to tip the 'Whig Winners' this time."

"There will be a hundred of them, at least, Dick; don't you think so?" asked Tyrrell.

"Yes; possibly two hundred."

"What shall we do?"

"I hardly know; Frank, here, says that there are, all told, fifty of the boys, but that number could not cope with two hundred redcoats, and it would be folly to try."

"You are right; it would be suicidal."

"Then what shall we do?"

"That is the question—and it is a hard one, too."

"Was Major Montford at our house this morning, Tom?" asked Alice.

"Yes, Sis," with a grin; "and he was asking for you, too."

Alice flushed angrily. "Little good it would have done me, even if I had been there," she said, with a sidewise glance at Dick Slater, to whom she had taken a great fancy. "I hate him!"

"I don't blame you," said Tom.

At that instant Tyrrell, who happened to glance up the road, exclaimed: "Yonder they come!"

All looked and saw a large body of horsemen approaching. It was three-quarters of a mile distant, however, and those who wished to do so would have time to get away.

"You four had better go," exclaimed Mr. Foster. "It won't do for you to be found here."

"True," agreed Dick. "Oh, how I wish I had my brave liberty Boys' here now."

"Where are they?" asked Tyrrell.

"They are on their way down from the North, but may be a hundred, or even two hundred miles away," was the reply. "I came on ahead with the message to General Lincoln, and the boys were to join me here later on."

"Ah, I see."

Then Dick, Tyrrell, Frank Foster and Tom Jones bade the folks good-by and hastened away into the timber back of the stable.

"I hate to hide out in this manner," said Dick.

"So do I," declared Tyrrell, a dissatisfied expression on his face.

"It can't be helped, however; we can't fight two hundred redcoats."

"No. Jove! I'm afraid they may do some deviltry at Mr. Foster's."

"Perhaps they may not."

The four paused just within the edge of the timber, and taking up positions behind trees watched for the coming of the redcoats.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALICE TRICKS THE MAJOR.

Major Montford was not in a very good humor when he walked away from the Jones' home. He was asking himself if Alice had gone to the Foster home in the country the evening before, in order to carry the news that he was coming out there with a force of men. If she had done so, he himself was responsible for the defeat which had been visited upon his force, for he had told the girl he was going.

"Curse the luck!" he said to himself. "One never knows about girls. They are just as apt to play tricks on a fellow as not. I wish I hadn't told her. I'll wager that she went out there on purpose to warn them, and the result was that a dozen of my men got killed and eight wounded. Never mind, though; I'm going right out there now, and I will have a little talk with her, and if I find that she did do that I shall make it so hot for her father that she will be willing to listen to my suit, I'll wager."

The major hastened back to his quarters, finished his preparations, and then went out and took his place at the head of his men. They rode out of the city, and away, and as the major looked back at the body of troopers he said to himself that it would go hard with the young rebels, if he got another chance at them.

An hour later they arrived at the home of Mr. Foster, and the major leaped to the ground, and advancing to the front door, knocked upon it. Mr. Foster opened the door and greeted the officer pleasantly.

"I'm back again, Mr. Foster," said the major.

"So I see."

"And this time I have brought enough men so that I shall be able to give those young scoundrels a thrashing, if they dare to show themselves."

"So I should judge, Major."

"Mr. Foster, I don't wish to accuse you of being a party to that affair of last night," the major said, impressively; "but I must say it is a bit suspicious, and I am going to ask you—have you seen any of those young scoundrels around here lately?"

"You mean the young men who attacked you last night?"

"Yes."

"No," was the ready reply, "I don't know any of them."

The officer looked searchingly at the man, and then said:

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes, indeed!" Mr. Foster did not think it any sin to tell a redcoat a falsehood. All is fair in war, he reasoned.

"Then you couldn't direct me to the homes of some of them?"

Mr. Foster shook his head. "I could not," he replied.

The major was evidently disappointed. "I was in hopes you would tell me where I could find at least one of them," he said. "If I could lay hands on one I would speedily force him to reveal the identity of his comrades."

"Yes, in that way you could get at them, Major; but I know none of the young men, so can not aid you in the matter."

The major could not dispute the truth of this statement, and for a few moments he was silent. Then he said: "Is Miss Alice Jones here yet?"

Mr. Foster bowed. "Yes, she is here," he replied.

"I would like to see her."

"Very well; come in, Major."

But the officer shook his head. "No; kindly tell her to step here, will you not?" he said. "I do not wish to go in the house."

"Very well; just as you like. I will tell her you wish to see her."

"Thank you."

Mr. Foster turned away, and entered the house—he having stepped out on the piazza to talk to the major—and a few moments later Alice Jones appeared at the door.

"Ah, Miss Alice! Good morning!" said the major, doffing his hat and bowing with great politeness. "I am, indeed, glad to see you; and will say that you are looking charming this morning."

"Why did you wish to see me?" asked Alice coldly, ignoring the flattering remark of the officer.

"I wished to have a talk with you, Alice."

"My name is Jones," coldly, and with dignity.

A vicious look appeared in the major's eyes. He understood what the girl meant, and it angered him. His teeth came together with a click, and he said: "I am well aware of that fact, Miss Alice, so why remind me of it?"

"For the reason that I wish you to call me by my name."

"Isn't your name Alice?"

"Yes; but I have never given you permission to call me by that name."

"But you will do so now." There was a threat in the tone, and the girl looked at the man quickly and intriguingly.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Just what I say," grimly. "Miss Alice, I wish to have a private conversation with you. Where shall we go?"

The girl looked disturbed and worried, but suddenly a peculiar light appeared in her eyes, and she said: "I must grant you an interview, let us go where neither folks in the house nor your men can hear what is said." "Where will we go?"

"Let us walk out back of the house," replied Alice, stepping out she led the way.

"I'll be back in a few minutes, boys," the major called out to his men, and then he went along with Alice.

"Miss Alice," said the major, "I have something of importance to say to you."

"What is it, sir?"

"I wish to ask why you came out here yesterday evening and gave these people warning that I and my men were coming?"

"Who says I did so?"

"No one says it; but I know that such is the case."

"I beg your pardon, Major Montford," said the major coldly; "but you cannot know anything of the kind."

"I am confident that such is the case."

"You may think you are sure of it and yet be mistaken, sir."

"Of course it is possible; but it is not probable. The fact remains that the people out here were warned of our coming, and as you knew of it and came out here the inference is obvious."

"I certainly shall not acknowledge that I did what you accuse me of having done, Major Montford," said the girl; "neither do I feel called upon to deny it."

"It would be a waste of breath for you to do so, a

away," said the major bluntly. "I am confident that you brought the word out here, and I will just say that your action has stamped you a rebel. If you're a rebel, your father is, and there is only one thing that will save him from being hung or shot."

"And that?" asked Alice, in a low, strained voice.

"Is for you to promise to be my wife." The major spoke earnestly, almost fiercely. It was evident that he was very much in love with the beautiful girl.

"Do you think it a manly thing to do to take advantage of a poor girl in this manner?" asked Alice. There was considerable scorn expressed in her tone. The major felt it, and hastened to say:

"My love for you must be my excuse, Alice. I have tried to get you to look upon my suit with favor, and you have refused to do so. Can you blame me, then, for making use of whatever means comes to my hand?"

"Yes, I can and do blame you," was the prompt reply. "You should be and act a man and not a coward."

The major shook his head. "I am determined to have you, come what may, Alice," he said; "and now that chance has thrown the means into my hands, I am going to use them."

While talking the two had been slowly walking back from the house toward the timber, which grew almost up to the rear of the stable. The major had been so interested in the conversation that he had not noticed where they were going, but Alice had; in fact, she had purposely led the way toward the timber. She knew that hidden behind some of the trees were the four who had left the house only a few minutes before, and her idea was that if she were to conduct the major to the timber, the four could leap upon him and make him a prisoner. She did not know just what this would do toward helping matters, but her thought was that the men would not dare do anything while their commander was a prisoner.

As the major finished speaking as above they were within ten yards of the timber, and Alice raised her voice a bit and said: "You are, in my opinion, a scoundrel, Major Montford, or you would not threaten me as you have just done. I wish some one who is my friend could hear you, and take you in hands. It would serve you right."

"All right, Alice; your wish shall be gratified!" cried Frank Foster, and he and his three companions sprang out of the edge of the timber and seized the major in a twinkling.

He was taken wholly by surprise, and before he could

collect his wits sufficiently to resist, or to call out, he was bound and gagged.

"Well, Alice, you did a good thing, that time," said Frank; "we have the redcoats' commander, and I guess they won't dare do anything now."

"What will you do with him?" the girl asked.

"I know a place to take him," replied Frank; "don't worry about that."

"And what shall I do?"

"You wait here a few minutes till we have got a good start, and then go back and tell the redcoats that somebody captured the major."

"Very well."

The four then hastened back into the timber and hustled the prisoner along at a lively rate. He could do nothing save walk along with them. He would have liked to have freed his mind by giving utterance to some exclamations of a rather forcible character, but could not as he was gagged.

Alice waited perhaps ten minutes and then she went running to the house as fast as she could. She ran around in front, and cried out to the soldiers: "Your commander has been captured! Your commander has been captured!"

Instantly all was excitement. The redcoats leaped down off their horses and crowded around the girl, asking questions, and the folks came running out of the house, eager to know what had happened.

Alice told how she and the major had walked back until they were close to the edge of the timber, and how some men had leaped out and made a prisoner of the major, and the troopers waited to hear no more, but rushed around the house and out to the timber.

They entered the timber and ran here, there and everywhere, penetrating a distance of a quarter of a mile, at least; but they neither saw nor heard anything of the major or of those who had made a prisoner of him.

They returned to the house, and, standing in the front yard, talked the matter over. They were without a head, so to speak, and did not know what to do.

Finally one, who seemed to have a better head than the rest, said that he thought the thing for them to do was to go into camp and then go to work and make a systematic search for the major.

"He will be held a prisoner somewhere in this vicinity, without a doubt," he said; "and the thing for us to do is to find him."

The others fell in with this idea, and going over across the road they went into camp. Having gotten things into shape they made their preparations for beginning the

search for their commander. It was decided to leave one-half the force in the camp, while the other half went in search of their commander, and it was understood that when the first searching party got tired and returned, the other half of the force would take its turn. Presently the hundred redcoats went over to the timber back of Mr. Foster's stable and disappeared from view.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

Dick Slater, Tyrrell, Frank Foster and Tom Jones, with Major Montford in their midst, walked rapidly onward, through the timber, and it was soon seen that Frank, who was in the lead, was making a wide circuit. Presently they came to the road, at a point half a mile from the house, and crossing the road they again plunged into the timber and continued on their way.

They continued to travel in a half-circle, and after fifteen minutes more of rapid walking they came to a log cabin standing in a dense clump of bushes, down on the bank of a little stream. The cabin was so surrounded by the bushes and underbrush that one might have passed within twenty yards of it, even in the daytime, and not discovered its presence.

"We will put the major in the cabin," said Frank; "I don't think there is any danger that his men will find him here. They will look for him away over on the other side of the road, and won't think to come in this direction."

"It will be a good hiding place for us," said Tyrrell; "we can make this a sort of rendezvous or headquarters, and keep watch of the redcoats from here."

"It is a good place," agreed Dick; "how far is it from the house?"

"About half a mile," replied Frank.

They conducted the major into the cabin, and here all remained throughout the day, save when Dick, Tyrrell or Frank Foster went out to see what had become of the British.

Along toward evening Dick asked the major how he felt.

"You fellows will suffer for this!" the prisoner said, glaring viciously; "you will be sorry for what you have done! My men will hunt you down and kill you without compunction!"

"We will take the chances," said Dick, quietly; "even if they were to find us, they would not dare try to injure us so long as we have you in our possession."

"Why not?"

"For the reason that if they tried to injure us we would retaliate by killing you."

This was said in such a calm, matter-of-fact voice that the major shuddered. He believed the speaker meant every word he uttered.

"You are impudent enough, now; but if my men were to appear, you would sing a different tune!" the officer said, with an attempt at boldness.

"Don't be too sure of it," was the cold reply.

After some discussion it was decided to leave Tom Jones in charge of the prisoner, while the three went out to take an observation and see what the redcoats were doing.

They gave the boy a pistol and told him to shoot the prisoner if he tried to escape, and Tom said he would. Then the three took their departure, and instead of going in a roundabout way they went straight toward the road. Frank knew the way, and a few minutes later they arrived at a point from whence they saw the redcoats' encampment. They paused and made an observation.

It did not take them long to discover that only about half the force was in the camp, and they shrewdly guessed that the others were out, searching for their commander and his captors.

The three remained there for half an hour or so, and then, feeling satisfied with what they had discovered, they stole away and started to return to the cabin. They had not gone far, however, before they heard the sound of footsteps near at hand, and they hastily concealed themselves and waited and watched for the newcomer to put in an appearance.

Soon a dark form appeared, and when the newcomer was within a few feet of Dick he gave utterance to a peculiar, tremulous whistle. Instantly the newcomer paused, and there came a whistle in return, exactly like the one Dick had emitted.

"Great Scott, Bob! Is it indeed you?" exclaimed Dick, in guarded tones.

"Yes; but what are you doing here, Dick?"

"I'll tell you in a minute, old man;" and then Dick said to his two companions: "This is a friend of mine—one of my 'Liberty Boys,' in fact. Bob Estabrook is his name; Bob, these are good friends of mine—Henry Tyrrell and Frank Foster."

The three thus introduced shook hands and then Dick asked: "Where are the boys, Bob?"

"In camp about a mile up the road, Dick."

"Good! But what were you doing down here?"

"I was scouting around a bit, trying to learn whether or not there were any redcoats in the neighborhood."

"Well, there are a-plenty of them."

"Is that so?" eagerly.

"Yes."

"Where are they?"

"There is a hundred of them right over here not a quarter of a mile away."

"And isn't that all of them?"

"No; there is another hundred scattered through the timber, over on the other side of the road, looking for us."

"Two hundred in all, eh?"

"Yes."

"That is two to our one; but I guess we can make it interesting for them."

"Yes; especially if we can take them by surprise."

"Well, I guess we can do that, can't we?"

"Perhaps."

After some further conversation the four made their way to the cabin where they found the prisoner quiet, and Tom sitting near by, pistol in hand.

"I'd have put a bullet through him if he tried any tricks!" the boy declared.

The four spent half an hour talking over the plan for attacking the redcoats, and as the major listened he grew pale. He realized that his men were in danger and he unconsciously tried to break the bonds and free his arms.

"It is no use; you can't do it," smiled Dick. "You will have to remain here a prisoner, while we give your men a taste of the kind of medicine they intended dealing out to the band of 'Whig Winners.'"

"How many men have you?" the major asked.

"One hundred," was the reply.

"I have twice that number; you will do well to not make an attack."

Dick smiled. "But my men are not ordinary soldiers," he said; "each of them is equal to at least two redcoats, any day, in a fair and even fight, and by taking your men by surprise we shall really have much the advantage."

"Who in blazes are you, anyway?" the major growled.

"My name is Dick Slater; and my men are known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Perhaps you have heard of us?"

The major had, and he uttered a groan. "I don't believe you!" he said. "The 'Liberty Boys' are not in the South."

"They are, now," was the quiet reply.

"What are they down here for?" the major wanted to know.

"Oh, it doesn't matter what they are here for," replied

Dick; "I don't care to tell you too much. You might escape, you see. Suffice it to say that they are here on business."

"They will wish they had not come if they attack my men, as you are figuring on doing!"

"You can't frighten us out of our purpose, my redcoat friend," said Dick, with a smile..

The major seemed to realize that this was the case, for he said no more.

"Will you stay here and watch the prisoner?" asked Dick, addressing the boy.

"Yes; I am willing to do anything that will be a help," Tom replied; "but why can't we tie his feet, too, and let him stay by himself? I'd like to take a part in the fight, if there is to be one."

There was such eagerness in the bright face of the boy that Dick could not refuse his request, and so they tied the major's ankles securely and placed him in a bunk at one side of the room.

"You might as well take things easy and go to sleep," said Dick, quietly.

A half-groan, half curse was the major's only reply. He was helpless and was feeling anything but good. He could not help recalling the fact that he owed his present plight of the girl he loved; and this made him almost wild with rage. To think that she had deliberately led him into a trap and caused him to be captured! It was maddening. He could not help himself, however; all he could do was to grin and bear it.

Presently the five left the cabin after blowing the candle out, and they closed the door behind them so that the cries of the prisoner, in case he uttered any, would not be so apt to be heard. Of course, they could have gagged him, but Dick did not think it necessary, and did not feel like making even a redcoat and enemy suffer as he would suffer if left for hours with a gag in his mouth.

The five made their way through the timber at a goodly pace. Bob said it was about a mile and a half to where the "Liberty Boys" were encamped, and it would take them thirty-five to forty minutes to reach the encampment.

When they had been walking twenty-five minutes, they were startled by hearing the sound of firing ahead of them. There was the desultory firing, such as might come from a picket line, and then a few moments later there came the roar of a volley of at least a hundred weapons.

"What can be the trouble?" asked Bob, as he leaped forward and started to run.

"The redcoats who were searching for their commander

have run onto our boys!" replied Dick. "Forward! we must get into the fight!"

The five dashed forward at top speed.

CHAPTER X.

A LIVELY ENCOUNTER.

After a run of a couple of minutes they came upon a scene which caused their blood to thrill. A hand-to-hand battle was raging between the "Liberty Boys" and fifty to seventy-five redcoats.

It was evident that the "Liberty Boys" were not getting the worst of it, by any means, and they were giving vent to cries of "Down with the king! Long live liberty!" as they fought. The redcoats were fighting desperately. It was plain how it had happened. The party of redcoats had come upon the sentinels which the "Liberty Boys" had out, and had been fired upon. Fancying that they would encounter only a small force, the redcoats had charged forward, driving the sentinels back upon their camp, where the youths had met the enemy with a volley, and then engaged them in a hand-to-hand combat.

Seeing how matters stood, Dick and his companions dashed forward and attacked the redcoats from the rear, yelling at the top of their voices as they did so. They gave utterance to such cries as, "Come on, boys! We have them at our mercy now!" and "Give it to the scoundrels! Kill them!"

The redcoats had the worst of it, any way, and now to be attacked from the rear by a force, the size of which they had no means of knowing, was too much for their nerves, and giving utterance to yells of fright they turned and fled at the top of their speed, leaving fifteen or twenty dead and wounded on the ground.

Three of the "Liberty Boys" had been killed, and four wounded, but fortunately the wounded ones were not seriously injured.

Dick and his companions held a council of war, and it was decided that, as it would be impossible to surprise the redcoats now, it would be advisable to begin an attack on them.

"We can keep within the shelter of the timber and keep up a constant fire on them," the youth said. "I think that by so doing we shall be able to force them to retreat back to Savannah."

The others thought this as good a plan as any, and they

at once broke camp, and set out down the road in the wake of the fleeing redcoats, who could just be seen in the distance, the night being clear and moonlight.

The "Liberty Boys" left the road when within a third of a mile of Mr. Foster's house, for they feared they might run into an ambush. They made a circuit out through the timber, and approached the point where the British encampment was, being careful to move slowly and cautiously, so as not to give the redcoats a chance to pour in a murderous volley.

When they came in sight of the spot where the redcoat had been encamped, it was seen that they had evacuated and retreated.

"Where have they gone?" asked Bob, wonderingly.

Dick's quick eyes detected their whereabouts presently. "I know," he said. "The rascals have gone over across the road and taken refuge behind Mr. Foster's house."

"That's right," agreed Bob. "I see some of them now."

"What shall we do?" asked Tyrrell.

"I'll tell you," replied Dick. "Bob, you take half our boys and go around and get into the timber behind them. We will open fire from here and make them think we are all here. This will give you a chance to execute the maneuver without their suspecting what is going on."

"All right, Dick."

Bob and fifty of the "Liberty Boys" stole away, and going in a semi-circle got across the road at a point a third of a mile distant, and succeeded in reaching the timber back of Mr. Foster's stable. Dick and the fifty men who had remained with him kept firing at the redcoats, and thus deceived them into thinking the entire force of their enemy was there.

They were destined to be rudely awakened from the feeling of security which had possession of them, however. They imagined that the house was perfect protection, and suddenly they were treated to a volley from the rear.

The distance was so great from the timber to the house that not a great deal of damage was done, but the fright was sufficient. With wild yells of terror the redcoats leaped into the saddles—they having their horses close by them—and dashed away up the road in the direction of Savannah. The "Liberty Boys" fired a volley after the frightened troopers and brought down one or two.

It was a complete rout, and Dick, Bob, Tyrrell and the rest were delighted.

"I rather think the redcoats will begin to think this is an unhealthy neighborhood pretty soon," said Frank Foster.

"You are right," agreed Dick. "Well, I hope that

will come to the conclusion that it will not pay to er people, for I wish to protect all patriots from in- or loss of property."

I never saw such a gang of cowards," said Tyrrell, eep disgust, as he gazed up the road in the direction n by the fleeing redcoats.

Perhaps they will brace up a bit and come back again," Bob Estabrook.

I wish they would; but I doubt it very much."

Mr. Foster's folks were glad that the redcoats had been to rout, as they did not fancy having them around.

I was afraid they might take it into their heads to n the house at any moment," Mrs. Foster said.

Where is Major Montford?" asked Alice Jones.

We have him a prisoner over in an old cabin in the ds," replied Dick. "We owe his capture to you, Miss es."

Well, I suppose you do. I made up my mind that if could get him into your hands you might be able to p the main body of troopers from doing any damage, threatening to kill their commander if they did."

And that is what we would have done had not my eerty Boys' put in an appearance and made it possi- for us to give the redcoats a fight."

What are you going to do with the major?"

Oh, I suppose we might as well hold him a prisoner a while, at any rate."

Well, I will tell you what I wish you would do, Mr. er."

What?"

First I will ask you a question."

I shall be glad to answer it."

It is this. Uncle says you are expecting General Lin- a to reach this part of the country soon with a patriot y—is that the case?"

Dick bowed. "It is," he said.

Sannah?"

And when he gets here is he going to try to recapture That is the intention, Miss Jones."

Good! Then I wish you would keep Major Montford a oner till I get back to the city and bring my parents k into the country. If the major should escape, or be wed to go free, the first thing he would do when he back to Savannah would be to have my father arrested, that is what he threatened to do, if I refused to accept as my suitor."

Oh, that was his scheme, eh?" exclaimed Dick. "He w your father was a patriot, and was using threats orce you to accept his hand?"

"Yes; that was what he was doing when you captured him."

"Well, I'm glad we succeeded in putting a stop to his scheme."

"So am I," with a peculiar glance at Dick, which he did not notice.

"Your father and mother had better come here and stay until after the finish of the attempt to recapture Savannah," said Mrs. Foster.

"That is what I want them to do," agreed Alice; "but what is bothering me is how are they to get here? I'm afraid they won't be allowed to leave Savannah."

"I'll tell you what to do; just leave that to me," said Dick. "I'm going into the city to-night, and will see them and give them such assistance as is necessary."

"You are going into the city to-night?" exclaimed Alice.

"Yes; I wish to do some spy work there."

"How long will you be there?"

"I shall probably remain all day to-morrow, and return to-morrow night."

Then you must make your headquarters at our house while you are there. I will write a note to father and mother, and they will make you comfortable."

"I know a better way than that, Sis," said Tom. "I'll go along with Mr. Slater."

"What do you want to go back there for?" asked Alice.

"Oh, I have a few things there that I want to bring when the folks come away; and, then, I think I can be of service to Mr. Slater in helping him get into the city. I know a way to go that isn't guarded."

"That will be quite a help to me," said Dick. "I shall be glad to have you along, Tom."

Dick cautioned the "Liberty Boys" to be on their guard against surprise by the British during his absence, and then he and Tom mounted their horses and rode away in the direction of Savannah. They rode slowly and kept a sharp lookout ahead, as they did not know but they might meet redcoats at any moment.

They did not encounter any of the enemy, however, and reached Savannah in safety, and succeeded in getting into the city without being seen, thanks to Tom's knowledge as a guide. They went straight to the home of Tom's parents, and were greeted pleasantly. They listened to the news eagerly, and when they had heard all, and learned who Dick was, and why he was in the city, they told him to make himself at home.

"You are welcome to stay here as long as you like," said Mr. Jones heartily, and Mrs. Jones said the same.

"I am going to remain in the city all day to-morrow, but am going back into the country to-morrow night, and I think it will be best for you to go with me," said Dick; "there is to be an attempt made to recapture Savannah in a few days, and when the fight commences there will be danger here."

"Then we must go, Thomas," declared Mrs. Jones. "We had better go out to brother's house till it is all over."

"That is what I should advise," the youth said.

Dick now excused himself. "I think I will go down into the main part of the city and take a look around," he said. "It is late, but I think the fact that the party of red-coats has returned with the news that they were put to flight by a rebel force will keep the place in a stir till later than usual, and I may pick up some information that will be of benefit when we begin the attack on Savannah."

Tom wanted to go along, but Dick told him that it would be better that he should go alone, and he took his departure. He was not long in getting down into the business portion of the city, and, as he had expected, he found that the city was yet very wide awake.

The streets were thronged with citizens and redcoats, and loud talk was the order of the day—or night, rather. The "terrible affair," as they spoke of the matter which was engaging their attention—the rout of the redcoats under Major Montford—was being discussed by Tories and redcoats with great energy. Some terrible threats were given utterance to by some of the redcoats. Indeed, everybody seemed to be worked up greatly.

"It has much the appearance of a hornet's nest after it has been poked with a stick," thought Dick.

He did not feel much fear of being bothered. He walked about in the most open manner. He did not believe any one in Savannah knew him by sight, so did not think he had anything to fear.

He kept moving around, and finally found himself in front of a large building, which was well lighted. There were two sentinels in front of the building, and men were coming and going all the time. Most of the men were British officers, and Dick shrewdly suspected that this was General Provost's headquarters. He made bold to ask of a citizen who happened to stop beside him for a few minutes, and was told that such was the case.

"That was a terrible affair, the routing of the British out in the country by that force of stranger rebels, wasn't it?" the citizen remarked.

"Yes, indeed!" acquiesced Dick.

"What do you suppose will be done now?"

"I don't know."

"I think Provost will get even with the scoundrels, if he has to send his entire force out there, don't you?"

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Dick.

"They say that the rebels captured the commander of the British force, Major Montford, and that they are holding him a prisoner."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; that is impudent, I think."

"Very!" said Dick dryly.

"I hope General Provost will send a big force out into the country and wipe the rebels off the face of the earth, don't you?"

"Yes, certainly," said Dick, but he made a mental reservation.

The man passed on, and Dick was left to his thoughts. He was standing there, watching the stream of officers going and coming, when suddenly an exclamation escaped him:

"Major Montford, by all that is wonderful!"

Yes, there, ascending the steps leading to the headquarters building was Major Montford, whom Dick supposed was lying a prisoner in the old cabin in the woods!

CHAPTER XI.

LINCOLN AND HIS ARMY ARRIVE.

Dick was almost paralyzed with amazement.

How had the major escaped? he asked himself. Of course, he could not answer the question, and he suddenly bethought himself that if the major was in Savannah, Alice Jones' parents were in danger.

"I promised her I would see to it that they got out of the city in safety," Dick said to himself, "and now I must keep my word. And if I do keep my word it will be necessary to get Mr. and Mrs. Jones out of the city at once—this very night."

Dick did not delay another instant. He knew that there was no time to be lost. The major would hold a conference with General Provost, and as soon as this was ended he would in all probability go right to the Jones home and arrest Mr. Jones.

Dick turned around so quickly that he bumped right against one of three redcoats who were coming up behind him. The impact was rather severe, and a snarling curse escaped the lips of the redcoat.

"What do you mean by bumping against a gentleman

in such fashion, you infernal boor!" he cried angrily. "Take that; and may it teach you some manners!"

He struck a blow at Dick's face as he spoke, but the blow did not land. Dick warded it off and hit the fellow a stroke between the eyes that floored him.

Then the fallen man's two comrades attacked Dick. They had been drinking some, and were just in the mood for fighting. They were pretty good men, too, but even though two to one, they were not enough for Dick, who was a wonder with his fists, as well as a splendid athlete, and quick as lightning on his feet.

The two redcoats made herculean efforts to get in on their opponent with some hard blows, but could not; and presently down they went, one after another, the first one falling on top of the one who had first gone down, and carrying him back to the ground. Thus all three were piled up, and Dick hastened away.

"I have other work to do besides fighting," he said to himself; "I can't afford to waste any more time."

The three redcoats struggled to their feet and looked after the retreating form of their late opponent.

"Come back here, you blasted coward!" yelled one.

"Yes, come back and be thrashed like a man!" from another.

"You had better run, you coward!" bawled the third.

"I am not a coward," called back Dick; "but I have some more important work on hand than administering a thrashing to such fellows as you!"

This made the three even more angry. "Let's chase him!" cried one.

But the other two shook their heads. "Let him go," said one; "come in here and have a drink. That will be more pleasant than racing after that fellow."

The one who had wanted to chase Dick decided that this was true, and the three entered a place where liquid refreshments were sold, and proceeded to drown the memory of the rough handling they had received in the flowing bowl.

Dick kept on his way and walked as rapidly as he could. He lost his way, once, and was ten minutes in getting back onto the right street, but finally arrived at the Jones home.

"What has happened? You look excited!" exclaimed Mr. Jones as soon as he saw Dick's face. Tom and his parents had remained up, in the expectation that Dick would bring some news that would be of interest.

"You must get ready to leave here at once!" cried Dick. "Major Montford has escaped escaped; and is in the city at this moment!"

"You don't mean it!"

"I wonder how he escaped?" this from Tim.

"I don't know how he did it," said Dick; "but I saw him enter General Prevost's headquarters, and there is no doubt at all but that he will keep his threat to Alice, and come here to make a prisoner of you, Mr. Jones."

"And if he should succeed in getting you in his power, Thomas, he would use it as a lever to force us to let Alice marry him!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones. "And I had almost rather see her dead than the wife of that scoundrel!"

"Well, you had better hurry," said Dick; "gather up such articles as you wish to take with you, and can carry handily, and then we will go. I will go out in front and keep watch for the coming of the redcoats while you are doing this."

"Very well; we will do so. It won't take us long, as we have not a great deal that is of value that can be carried."

Dick opened the door and stepped out into the front yard. It was cloudy, and he was not afraid of being seen.

He had been there perhaps ten minutes when he saw a party of redcoats pass through a strip of light thrown by a street lamp at a point a hundred yards distant.

"They are coming!" he said to himself; then he quickly entered the house and closed and barred the door. "Are you ready?" he inquired of Mr. Jones. "We must be going, however, whether you are ready or not, for the redcoats are coming!"

The four went out into the kitchen and emerged from the house by way of the rear door. As they did so they heard the sound of knocking on the front door.

"Come on, as fast as possible!" half whispered Dick. "They may come around to the back."

The four were soon in the alley at the rear of the back yard, and as they started up the alley they heard the noise of some one knocking on the back door.

"We just got away in the nick of time," said Dick.

"Yes; another minute and they would have had us!" agreed Mr. Jones.

They had gone only a little distance when they heard a wild yell from the direction of the house.

"They have discovered that you have escaped them," said Dick; "they may try to pursue us so we had better go as fast as we can for a while."

They almost ran, and as they were in the suburbs, and it was dark everywhere, they were not in much danger of being seen. They were heading for the point at which

Tom made his exit, and by way of which Dick and the boy had entered the city. They had no difficulty in getting through the British picket line, as this point was not watched, and half an hour later they came to a stop in front of a farmhouse standing a mile out from the city limits. A patriot, and a friend of the Jones' lived here, and Mr. Jones got the man of the house up, and after explaining the situation, secured the use of a team and wagon. The man came out and helped hitch up, and then when they had become seated in the wagon he bade them good-by, with the best of wishes that they would arrive at the Foster home in safety.

They did so, reaching there an hour later, and were welcomed by their friends most joyously. To Dick's query regarding how Major Montford had escaped, Bob and Tyrrell replied that they did not know he had escaped. "We thought we might as well leave him in the cabin over night," explained Tyrrell, "and supposed he was there."

"No," replied Dick; "he got away, and is in Savannah; that's the reason we came back to-night instead of waiting till to-morrow night."

The manner of Major Montford's escape was very simple. He had remained in the cabin, tied hand and foot, and fretting and fuming most impotently for a couple of hours, and cursing his luck generally. He heard the sound of the firearms when the "Liberty Boys" and his men had their engagement, and he wondered what was up.

"That sounds like a battle!" he thought. "I wonder if there is a large force of rebels in this part of the country, and if they have attacked my men? It would be just my luck to have all my men wiped out, this time! I seem to be having a bad streak of luck, sure. Curse that girl! She led me into that trap, intentionally, I know; and if ever I get a chance at her father, I will make him a prisoner and then make the girl come to terms! Jove! I love and hate her at one and the same time, and nothing would give me more joy than to triumph over her and force her to come down upon her knees at my feet to beg for the life of her father!"

Perhaps another hour passed and then the major heard footsteps outside the cabin. "Hello! some one is coming!" he said to himself, and then his heart, which had bounded with hope, sank in his bosom.

"Some of those scoundrels coming back to see that I am still a prisoner, I suppose," he thought. Then the door opened and a figure was outlined against the moonlight background beyond.

The major saw at once that it was not either of those who had made him a prisoner, for this man was dressed in rough clothing such as is worn by hunters and trappers. Again the feeling of hope took possession of the prisoner. Perhaps this man might be a loyalist, and in that case help was at hand.

"Hello!" called out the major. "How are you, stranger?"

The man gave a start, and cried out: "Who's thar?"

"A friend, I think," was the reply. "Who and what are you? Are you Whig or Tory?"

The stranger held a long rifle in his hand and he cocked it and held it ready for use. "I don't know ez I'm called on ter criminate myse'f," was the grim reply. "Who an' whut air yo'?"

"You needn't be alarmed," replied the major, "I am a prisoner, bound hand and foot."

"Whut!—er pris'ner?"

"Yes."

"Who air yo'?"

The major thought he might as well make a clean breast of it, so he told who he was and how he came to be a prisoner, and wound up with: "And now, if you are a friend of the king, please release me."

"All right," was the reply; "I'm er king's man, I am, an' I'll hev yo' free in less'n ther wag uv a lomb's tail."

The major's heart bounded with delight. "Thank you!" he said; "you shall lose nothing by this."

"Thet's all right," was the reply. Then the hunter quickly cut the major's bonds and freed him. As soon as he regained the use of his limbs the major gave the hunter a gold piece, and, bidding him good-by, set out toward the Foster farmhouse, the man having directed him which way to go. He soon reached the vicinity, only to find that a party of "rebels" was in possession, and his own men were gone.

He made up his mind to get back to Savannah as quickly as possible, and so made a wide detour, and getting around the encampment of the enemy, struck the road and hastened onward in the direction of the city. He had no horse, and knew not where to get one, so had to walk the entire distance, this taking him about an hour and a half, as the major was not a very good walker. On reaching the city he had gone at once to headquarters to report, and it was as he was going up the steps to do this that Dick had seen and recognized him, as already stated.

General Prevost was in a tearing rage, and raked the major over the coals unmercifully. "So you allowed yourself to be tricked and led into a trap and captured

by a girl, eh?" he roared. "And left your men without any one to command them, and the result was that a score of them were killed and wounded. You are a beautiful, a magnificent officer, I must say!"

The major did not have much to say in his own defense. "I am sweet on the girl, I admit," he said, doggedly, "and I'm going to marry her, too, if I can manage it. I'm sorry the affair turned out as it did; but don't think I should be blamed too severely. Who could have foreseen that that scoundrelly Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' would be down in this part of the country?"

This was the first intimation the general had received of who the patriots were that had put the troopers to flight, and he was surprised.

"You don't mean to say that the scoundrels who routed our boys are the fellows known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' do you?" he cried.

The major nodded. "I do mean to say that very thing!" he declared. "And they are terrible fellows in a fight, too, I have always heard."

"There is no doubt regarding that," grimly; "the boys found that out. They have just sent a man in to report to me, and I was just thinking of trying to send out a force to rescue you."

"Thank you; well, it won't be necessary now, as I am back. But, general, I have a favor to ask at your hands."

"What is it?"

"I wish to be allowed to go and arrest the father of Alice Jones, the girl whom I am in love with. He is, I am confident, a patriot; but I don't wish him to be harmed. I wish to make a prisoner of him and then hold a threat over the girl's head to force her to look upon my suit with favor; do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. Well, go ahead. Take as many men as you like, and bring him to me when you have secured him. I wish to have a little conversation with him."

"Very well."

Major Montford saluted and withdrew; and going to his quarters, picked out four men and started at once for the home of the Joneses. It was his party that Dick had seen coming, and who had knocked on the doors as they had been heard do by the fugitives.

Receiving no replies to his demands for admittance, the major finally tried the back door and found it unfastened.

They entered and soon discovered that the birds had flown. The major was furious. "How did they know we were coming, I wonder?" he cried. "Curse the luck,

anyway! I am destined to fail in everything I undertake, I guess. Come, boys; let's see if we can catch them. I am of the opinion that they have been gone but a few minutes."

They went out, and, crossing the back yard, entered the alley and followed it to the street. They turned up the street, at a guess, and made their way in that direction half a dozen blocks, when, having seen no signs of the fugitives, they gave it up and started back.

They went back to the house and went through it, taking such things as they could carry handily, and as they cared for. Then they took their departure, and the men returned to their quarters while the major again made his way to headquarters to report to General Prevost.

"He is gone, you say?" cried the general, when the major had told his story. "Well, that is strange. He must have got wind of what was going on."

"It would look that way."

"There can be no doubt of it."

"It is just my luck!" growled the major. "I thought that I had the game in my own hands, but have lost everything."

"Where do you suppose he has gone?"

"Oh, they have all gone out to that man Foster's place. They are related."

"Oh, that's where they have gone, you think?"

"I am sure of it."

"Well, then, you may succeed yet. I am going to send a force out there—a force large enough to eat that gang of 'Liberty Boys,' as they call themselves, up!"

The major brightened up. "Good!" he exclaimed. "I don't ask to be given the command of the force, but I wish to go along as one of the under officers."

"You shall be allowed to do so, major."

"Thank you."

But the general did not send the force out next day, after all, nor, of course, did the major get to go. When morning came a British scout—a Tory—came to headquarters with the news that a large patriot force was advancing toward the city! And a few minutes after his arrival—indeed, while he was still in General Prevost's office—an officer came rushing in with the information that a large fleet of vessels was standing off and on, outside the harbor.

"Great Guns! It is Lincoln's land force, and the French fleet that I have been expecting would show up sooner or later!" exclaimed the general. "Undoubtedly they are going to try to recapture Savannah!"

"It looks that way," agreed the officer.

"Oh, there can be no doubt regarding it! We must begin work at once. Earthworks must be thrown up and all possible preparations must be made to repel them. We must hold Savannah, come what may!"

CHAPTER XII.

"THE 'LIBERTY BOYS' BOMBARDED."

Dick and the "Liberty Boys" took up their quarters near the home of the Fosters. There was a splendid place for a camp, there, and they were just about the right distance away from Savannah.

"And we will be here to protect the homes of the Whigs, in case the British try to do any damage," said Dick.

The morning after the escape of Dick and the Joneses from the city, a messenger came in and told Dick that General Lincoln's force was coming. Dick mounted his horse at once and rode to meet the approaching army. He had as yet never met General Lincoln, and introduced himself as the bearer of a message from the commander-in-chief.

He was greeted pleasantly by Lincoln, who stopped and read the message. It was to the effect that the French fleet would appear in Southern waters, soon, and that it would co-operate with him in the attempt to reduce and recapture Savannah.

This was satisfactory, and what he wished, and then he began making inquiries of Dick regarding the lay of the land in the vicinity of Savannah, and asked if he knew of a good place for the army to encamp. Dick told him he did, and acted as guide, leading the way to a splendid place—a strip of wooded, high ground two miles from Savannah. Here the army went into camp, and began making preparations for going to work. Shortly after dinner a messenger came in with the report that a fleet of vessels had been seen standing in and out, off shore, and it was decided at once that it must be the French fleet under Estaing.

This caused great excitement, for if the French fleet was on hand the work of investing the city could be begun at once. General Lincoln asked for a volunteer to go out and board one of the vessels and hold a conversation with Estaing, and Dick volunteered. His services were accepted, with thanks, and after receiving full instructions he set out.

He went on horseback, by a roundabout route, to the shore, and here he hunted around for an hour or more before finding a boat. Then he ran across a fisherman with a little fishing boat, and hired him to row off to the fleet.

It was rather a rough trip, as the wind was blowing pretty hard, but Dick did not mind it, and after a couple of hours of rowing and working, Dick was placed alongside one of the ships. He called out to the lookout and asked which vessel Estaing was on. The man was a Frenchman, of course, and did not understand Dick's question, but he understood the word, "Estaing," and nodded and gesticulated, and motioned for Dick to come aboard.

"I guess he means that the feller is on this ship, mate," said the fisherman.

"I judge you are right," replied Dick. Then he climbed up the ladder and was soon on deck. He was shown to a cabin, and there he found the commander of the fleet, D'Estaing. The Frenchman could speak English fairly well, and this made things easy.

Dick at once introduced himself and told the count why he had come, and asked his views regarding the way in which his fleet should co-operate with the land forces under Lincoln.

"Tell General Lincoln," said Estaing, "that I will be ready to join in the attack on Savannah at a signal from him. Tell him to advance upon the city and get ready for the attack as soon as possible, as this is a dangerous point for my ships; a storm is likely to come up at any moment."

"I will tell him," said Dick; "but it will be slow work advancing on the city. It will take a couple of weeks at least, and possibly longer, for us to get within striking distance. It will be a gradual game of work-up, you know, and we will have to fight for every inch of ground that we win."

"I am aware of that. Well, do the best you can. And when you are ready, make a signal so that I shall know."

"What shall the signal be, sir?"

"I know not. Is there no high point where a flag can be hoisted and that I can see?"

Dick pondered a few moments. "Yes, there is a point such as you speak of," he replied. "From where your fleet is now you can see a large house on a hill, off to the right from the city, and about three-quarters of a mile from it. When you see a flag raised over that house do you begin the bombardment of the city."

"Very well; I will do so. I will remain in this vicinity

and wait for the signal, and when it appears I will at once open fire on the city."

After talking half an hour longer Dick took his departure, and entering the boat was rowed back to the shore. Thanking the boatman the youth mounted his horse and rode away.

An hour later he was back in the patriot encampment and had a long talk with General Lincoln, telling him everything that Estaing had said. It was satisfactory, and Lincoln at once issued orders for the work of advancing on Savannah to begin.

Dick told him about the signal, and Lincoln inquired who owned the house in question.

"A strong patriot," Dick replied; "and I know they will be willing to let us use the house as a signal station."

"I hope so; perhaps you had better go and see about it, however."

"Very well; I will do so."

Dick took his departure and went at once to the house in question. He met the owner and told him what he wished to do.

"That will be all right," the patriot said, heartily; "I want to see the redcoats driven out of this country, and anything that I can do will be gladly done. When you get ready to fly the signal, just come along; it will be all right."

Dick thanked him and went back to Lincoln with the report.

"That is settled, then," he said; "the signal and the place from which the signal is to be displayed have been decided upon; now the thing to do is to get to work and reduce the city."

Work was begun at once, and Dick and the "Liberty Boys" were right in the midst of it all. Each day saw an advance of the patriot army, and as the days passed the patriots drew nearer and nearer to the city.

This was not done in peace and quiet, you may be sure. The British were wide awake, and kept firing from behind their earthworks, even bringing their cannon to bear, and it was warm work for the patriots, to say the least. They persevered, however, and advanced steadily and with dogged persistency.

Closer and closer they came, and finally they captured the outer earthworks of the British; this encouraged them, and they went at it with redoubled energy. Onward they pressed, and a few days later Lincoln called Dick to his side and told him that at noon that day he would make an attempt to storm the British works.

"Do you take some of your men and go to the house

and display the signal," he instructed. "Wait till half-past twelve, and then raise the flag. At that hour I will begin the attack on the main works of the British here, and between us we ought to be able to make it warm for the enemy."

"I think so, sir. Well, I will take two or three of my 'Liberty Boys' and be off."

The flag had long been ready and was made up of three pieces of cloth, of red, white and blue color, respectively, and taking it, Dick, Bob, Mark Morrison and Sam Sanderson set out. They made their way to the farmhouse, and were greeted pleasantly by the owner.

"So Lincoln is goin' to begin the attack on the British to-day, is he?" he remarked. "Well, I'm glad of it, an' I hope he will drive 'em out of Savannah or capture the whole lot of 'em!"

"I hope so!" agreed Dick. Then he and the boys made their way up to the attic and then on up through a trap-door, onto a little flat place at the extreme top of the roof, and here they fastened the flag. A nice breeze was blowing, and the flag waved proudly; and they felt confident the people on the vessels of the French fleet would have no trouble in seeing the signal. They looked seaward and could see the ships plainly. As they stood there, looking, there came the puff of white smoke from the side of the flagship, and then the report of a cannon echoed forth.

"That is to let us know they have seen the signal!" cried Bob, delightedly.

"I guess you are right," agreed Dick.

They stood there, still looking toward the sea, when they were startled by seeing a solid shot strike the ground not a hundred yards distant and tear it up at a great rate.

"Great guns! that came from the British works!" cried Bob, in consternation.

"That's right; they want to let us know that they have seen the signal!" said Mark Morrison, drily.

Their attention was turned toward the British works, now, and they saw two puffs of white smoke in that direction. Then there came the sound of two reports, and two cannon-balls struck not far from the house and tore up the dirt.

"They are bombarding us!" cried Dick. "We must get away from here, and in a hurry, too!"

They hastened down through the trap-door, and on downstairs, and told the inmates of the house that they had better be getting away, as the British were bombarding the house; and the man hastened to conduct his wife and daughter out and away. The youths had remained till

the others were out, and were just going to follow when the cannon-balls began falling in almost a shower all around.

It was a terrible bombardment. A cannon-ball tore a great hole in the wall, and the "Liberty Boys" leaped away in terror.

"Great guns! this is getting too warm for me!" cried Bob; "let's make a break for it and take the chances!"

"I am willing," replied Dick, and the other two signified that they were agreeable. They waited till a moment came when there was a comparative lull in the downpour of cannon-balls, and darting out of the house they ran toward the timber a quarter of a mile distant, with all their might.

They reached the timber in safety, though one or two of the missiles came very close to them, and they found the farmer and his wife and daughter there.

"That was rather a warm time!" said Dick.

"A very warm time, I should say!" acquiesced the man.

"I'm sorry that we have gotten you in trouble," the youth said.

"Oh, that is all right; I don't suppose they will succeed in knocking the house entirely to pieces, and I can fix it up again, all right."

"Where will you go?"

"My brother lives down the road here a mile, and we will go there and stay till this trouble is over."

"That is a good plan; and I would advise that you go at once. It is not safe, even here."

The three bade Dick and his companions good-by, and started up the road in the direction of the home of the man's brother, and the youths started back to the patriot force.

"There's going to be some warm fighting, and I want to be in it!" said Bob.

The others all felt the same way about it, and they mounted their horses, which had been tied near at hand in the woods, and rode back at a gallop.

They were soon at the point where the permanent camp was located, and leaving their horses, hastened to the front, where the rest of the "Liberty Boys" were.

They were greeted with cheers from their comrades, and then they turned their attention to the work in hand. The attack had already begun, and it was forced during the entire afternoon, the patriots advancing slowly, but surely. It was warm work, and all realized this very keenly, but they did not falter, but stuck to it with bulldog-like tenacity.

All that afternoon the cannon roared and the muskets

cracked; the British were bombarded from the water side by the French fleet, and were attacked fiercely from the land side by the patriot army, and they were kept busy. They fought with the bulldog-like obstinacy of the Britons the world over, however, and held their own remarkably well. Provost was here, there and everywhere, directing the defence, and it was very ably conducted.

The patriots and their French allies did their best, but the British defence was too strong, and they were finally hurled back. The "Liberty Boys" were in the front ranks, and did wonderful work, but even they could not lead the patriots over the British works, and at last they were forced to retire. A number of the brave boys fell to rise no more, but that did not make any difference; they were soldiers, and expected to die the death of soldiers. The others were a bit more sober than usual that night, that was all, as they noted the faces that were missing and in their minds recalled those faces.

"Poor fellows!" said Dick, with a sigh. "I am sorry for their parents, sisters and sweethearts."

To say that General Lincoln was disappointed by his failure to recapture Savannah is putting it mildly. He almost wept; but he declared that on the morrow they would make another attempt. When told this, Dick Slaters and his "Liberty Boys" shook their heads. "He can never take Savannah," said Dick. "He will lose a lot more of his men, that is all. The British are too well intrenched. But we will fight to the last gasp, if he says for us to do so."

The loss of the patriots and French exceeded one thousand men, while the British, having been sheltered, lost only fifty-five. It is doubtful whether the French fleet would have co-operated with the patriots on the following day, anyway, but that night a gale came up, and the ships had to run before it, to escape being dashed to pieces on the rocks. So fierce and long-continued was the storm that the fleet was driven several hundred miles away, and the ships were so racked and disabled that part of them went to the West Indies, while the others went across to France.

When, next morning, Lincoln learned that the fleet was gone he was in despair; he did not dare to attack the British without the aid of his French allies, and there was nothing left for it but to give up the idea of recapturing Savannah.

He decided to remain in the vicinity a while longer, however, in the hope that the French fleet might return, but he finally gave up and took his departure with the remnant of his army.

Dick and his "Liberty Boys" intended to return to the North, but decided to go out and see the Fosters and Joneses, and say good-by before going. Tyrrell had been with them in the battle with the British, and had done great work, and we would not let Dick and the rest go away without spending a day at the home of the Fosters.

"They would never forgive you," he said, "if you were to go away without coming out and seeing them."

So they went, and it was lucky they did; for as they were riding over the hill half a mile distant from the Foster farmhouse, they saw a band of redcoats dismounting at the gate.

"They know that Lincoln has gone, and I have no doubt that Major Montford is at the head of that gang, and that he has come to make a prisoner of Mr. Jones, in order to force Alice to marry him," said Tyrrell.

"I judge you are right," agreed Dick. "Well, I think we shall be able to spoil his game, for there are not more than one hundred men there, and we are able for an equal number, even though we have been banged around pretty hard for a while, and are not in the best of trim."

"You are right; we will be able to handle them, Dick," cried Bob; "and I, for one, am glad of the chance to get at them. It will make me feel better for our failure to recapture Savannah."

"It will make all of us feel better, I judge," said Dick. "Well, forward, all, and when you get within shooting distance let them have a volley, after which charge them for all you are worth!"

Forward the "Liberty Boys" dashed, and a few minutes later was close upon the British. Just as the redcoats caught sight of the "Liberty Boys" they fired a volley, and several of the British went down.

"Charge!" roared Dick, waving his sword. "Charge! And give it to the scoundrels!"

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!" was the cry, and it was roared out with such energy that the redcoats were demoralized. They fired a scattering volley that did little damage, and then took to their heels, running for the timber at the back of the house.

The youths did not pursue, as they realized that to do so would be to run into danger, for the redcoats might take advantage of the shelter of the trees, and turn on them and inflict considerable damage.

Dismounting, Dick stationed three or four sentinels, to keep watch for the redcoats, in case they should try to slip up and make a sudden attack, and then he and Tyrrell went to the house. As they did so they passed several dead and wounded British soldiers, and near the piazza they

came upon Major Montford. He was sorely wounded, and was groaning with pain. He recognized Dick, and called to him feebly.

"What do you want, Major?" asked Dick, kneeling by the wounded man's side. "Can I do anything for you?"

"I have my death-wound," was the weak reply. "I have only a few minutes to live, and I wish you would ask Alice Jones to come here—will you? It is the request of a dying man."

"Why, of course," said Dick; "but perhaps it isn't as bad as you think. Let me make an examination."

"No use. I am an old soldier, Mr. Slater, and know that I have my death-wound. Bring Miss Alice to me, and that it all the favor I shall ask."

Dick entered the house, and after greeting the inmates, said that Major Montford, sorely wounded, wished to speak to Alice.

The girl looked as if she did not want to go, but Dick said: "I do not think he has ten minutes to live, Miss Alice. If you will go out and speak to the poor fellow I think you will not regret it."

"Very well, then; I will go, Mr. Slater," she said, and she accompanied the youth out of the house to where the wounded man lay.

Major Montford's face lighted up as his eyes fell upon Alice, and he said faintly: "Thank you for coming, Miss Alice. I—I was afraid you—you would not—come."

"I could not refuse the request of a dying man," replied the girl, in a low, sorrowful voice. Much as she detested the man, she felt sorry for him, now that he was at death's door.

"I just wished to—ask—you if you—would—if you would forgive—me," the dying man said.

"Don't say another word, Major Montford," said the girl. "I forgive you, fully and freely."

"Thank you!—and—God bless—you!"

The major's head fell back, a peculiar rattling sound came from his throat, and Dick gently turned Alice, and led her to the house. There she turned, and with tears in her eyes as she gazed toward the stiffening form, she said: "Poor, poor fellow! Perhaps he has a mother in England."

"There were worse men than he in the British army," said Dick.

Bob approached Dick at this moment, and said that the redcoats had sent a messenger under the protection of a flag of truce, and were asking if they might have their horses, if they would return to Savannah. Dick went out and confronted the messenger.

"Tell your comrades that if they will give a solemn promise to not come here and bother these folks again I will let them take their horses and return; if they refuse to give the promise I shall keep the horses, and shall in addition hunt down and kill the majority of you. My men are all woodsmen, and we will be able to find you without trouble."

The messenger hastened away, and soon returned with the information that the men had agreed to the terms.

"One thing you must do before you go, though," said Dick, "and that is to bury your dead, and take care of your wounded."

"Of course we shall be glad to do that," was the reply. "We wouldn't wish to go away and leave the wounded behind, or the dead uncared for."

So the redcoats came forth from the timber, and went to work and buried their dead comrades, after which they secured the use of a wagon, and loading the wounded men into it, drove and rode away. They promised to send the wagon back, and did so, thus proving that they intended to keep faith with Dick and his friends.

Dick and the "Liberty Boys" remained in the vicinity for a week or so, as they had nothing else to do, and were in no hurry about returning to the North, and as the redcoats had not again come out to bother Mr. Foster, they decided at last that it would be safe to leave.

There was considerable sorrow expressed by the Fosters, Joneses and others when the youths announced that they would go, for they had grown into the hearts of the honest patriots. Indeed, there were several of the girls of the neighborhood who had taken a liking to some of the "Liberty Boys," and they were very sorry to have them

go. Alice Jones was one of these. She had taken a great liking to Dick Slater, but he had not taken notice of the fact, and did not suspect it—and it was a good thing, for he was very conscientious, and would have felt bad had he known that he was causing any one pain.

Alice put on a brave front, however, and kept her secret to herself—at any rate, no one, unless it might be her mother, suspected the truth.

Next morning after announcing that they would start for the North, the "Liberty Boys" mounted their horses and rode away, followed by the good wishes of all their friends. At the top of the hill to the northward, and half a mile distant, they paused a moment, turned in their saddles, waved their hats, and were gone.

Alice Jones grieved for quite a while, but finally allowed herself to be comforted by one of the young men of the neighborhood. We may as well add that they were married when the war was over, as were Henry Tyrrell and Carrie Foster and Frank Foster and Daisy Denton.

THE END.

The next number (61) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' SEALED ORDERS; OR, GOING IT BLIND," by Harry Moore.

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